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ABSTRACT

The Commission on Status of Women section of the proceedings contains the following three papers: "The Last Male Bastion Enters the 21st Century: The Changing View of Women's Professional Basketball in One Newspaper's Sports Department" (Lynn Klyde-Silverstein); "A Woman's Place: Newspaper Advice Columns in the Wake of the Nineteenth Amendment--A Case Study" (Jacquelyn A. Lowman and Lucinda D. Davenport); and "Images of Women's Basketball Players on the Covers of Collegiate Media Guides" (Kiki N. Baker). (RS)

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The Last Male Bastion Enters the 21st Century: The Changing View of Women's Professional Basketball In One Newspaper's Sports Department

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We aren't in the habit of thinking of the Cats as a prime beat. And we need to be in the habit. We need to get into the habit very quickly, because it is one of our prime beats.

— Rene, assistant sports editor, The Coolville Courier

Since the WNBA's inception in 1996, the Coolville Cats have had trouble finding a place in the sports section of their hometown newspaper, The Coolville Courier. The struggle has been far from easy, and it is a long way from over. To be taken seriously as a "prime beat," the Cats must fight against not only the rest of the day's news, but against a tradition.

The sports section is considered by many one of the last male bastions of the newspaper industry. Sports sections traditionally have been run by men, for men. While the number of women in most newsrooms equals that of men, women in sports departments are still relatively rare. With five women on a staff of 30, the Courier has a higher number of women than most sports departments. Male dominance, though, goes beyond the staff. According to a 1999 reader survey, 74 percent of the Courier sports section's audience is male. Attracting more female readers is one of the section's goals. The question of how to get more women interested in the section is still being debated. Other questions the section faces include dealing with pressure from inside and outside the newsroom and staying in the black financially. In this paper, I examine all of these issues and their bearing on the paper's relationship with the WNBA and the Coolville Cats. To do this, I also discuss the manner in which the section is put together each day. In so doing, I look at the reporters' and editors' attitudes toward the Cats and how those attitudes changed during the team's first three years of existence. This paper is part of a larger study of the relationships between the Courier and its hometown WNBA team.

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Related Literature

The manner in which the media frame female athletes helps maintain stereotypes (Messner, 1988). Outstanding female athletes are framed as exceptions to the rule. Hilliard (1984) found discrimination in the treatment of top-ranked men's and women's tennis players in magazines: While men were shown overcoming their flaws, women were overcome by them.

After examining television transcripts of the 1986 NCAA women's and men's championship basketball games, Duncan & Hasbrook (1988) concluded that the coverage denied power for women and reinforced power for men. The above literature supports Kane's (1989) conclusion that when they have been covered, female athletes have been presented in a stereotypically sexist manner.

While it is important to examine literature dealing specifically with the coverage of female athletes, also germane to the present study is the creation of news in general. News means something different to everyone. If this were not true, every paper's front page would be identical, day in and day out. Occurrences only become news when someone in authority deems them newsworthy. Before information gets to readers in the form of a newspaper story, it must pass through several "gatekeepers" – including reporters and editors (White, 1950). According to White, gatekeeping is a subjective process that is dependant on time and space constraints.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) discuss a hierarchy of influences on the media. The five levels of influence are individual, routines, organization, extra media, and ideology. The individual level forms the center of the circular model, with each of the other levels forming a larger circle around the center. Ideology surrounds the entire sphere of influence on news media content. Just as hegemony allows those in power to remain in power, ideology shapes all the other levels of media influence (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). This work is pertinent to the present

study. All five levels, in fact, have an influence on how the sports section works and how relationships are maintained. In various ways, other researchers have examined the media influences posited by Shoemaker and Reese.

Some newspaper editors decide what to print by employing rules. Looking at the newsroom as a formal organization, Breed (1955) describes how reporters learn to write by becoming socialized to the newsroom's policy. Gitlin (1980) discusses the systemic nature of news making. As he says, "Anything could be news, for news is what news-gatherers working in news-processing organizations say is news" (p. 268).

Theberge & Cronk (1986) found that the biggest barrier to better coverage of women's sports is not the operation of the sports department but rather the social organization of sports in North America and its domination by revenue-driven spectator sports intended for male audiences. The authors concluded that, because of the way the sports world is organized, sports sections must rely on three things: wire services, well-established sources, and a constant layout structure. The first two generally supply news on male sports, while the third makes it difficult for other news to find a spot in the section.

The literature cited above presents two issues. First, there are problems with the way women's sports are covered. Second, news is manufactured in a subjective manner. Combining these themes, the present study examines how the structure of one newspaper's sports department affects the way in which news about women's professional basketball comes to be.

Theoretical Grounding

This study is grounded in three theoretical frameworks: critical theory, standpoint theory, and framing theory. Using critical theory as a starting point for research can be the first step to change for the better (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1996; Carspecken, 1996). Through my work, I

hope to help staff members of the Courier's sports department better understand their relationship with the Cats so that they may use that knowledge to improve their coverage of women's basketball. In a broader sense, any journalist reading this study might decide to examine his or her own relationships with sources and co-workers. This might even help improve the journalist's own job performance. Newspaper readers, fans of the WNBA or not, can use this information to gain a better understanding of how the news is made.

Standpoint theory can be fashioned to fit any number of relationships. I examined each participant's role in the process of covering the WNBA from his or her specific standpoint. The key question was this: How does each individual's standpoint influence what gets done in the making of news about the WNBA? For example, as a white male, Todd had quite a different perspective than Jeri, a white female. Many of the players were African American. How did they react to white reporters, and vice versa? The lesbian fans I talked with saw the situation differently, as well. The question of standpoint revolves around all the relationships that exist between and within the media and the WNBA.

Framing is the act of selecting certain aspects of an ideology and communicating them in such a way as to promote one point of view (Entman, 1993). As the Shoemaker and Reese (1996) model shows, ideology is an important influence on news content. Entman (1993) writes that culture is nothing more than a combination of frames held in common by a society. The frames created and reinforced by the media help form a culture's ideology. Grounding my research in framing theory brings several questions to mind. For example, how does the newspaper frame the WNBA in its sports section? Conversely, how do WNBA representatives frame the WNBA in their answers to questions and in their publicity material? How are these

frames manufactured through relationships and through coverage? Theoretical grounding gave me a logical vantage point from which to begin my research.

Study Design

This is a qualitative case study employing participant observation and interviews to examine the structure of one publication's sports department. This type of research requires time spent in the field, not just watching but working with members of the culture being studied. To accomplish this goal, I became a part of the sports department at The Coolville Courier, a 300,000-circulation daily newspaper in a WNBA city. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, the names of those involved, as well as the names of the city, teams, and newspaper, have been changed. The real Coolville is a city of approximately 1.5 million people.

For two months, I studied the structure of the Courier's sports department through participant observation and interviews. I examined how the editors and reporters related to one another, as well as how they related to other departments within the newsroom. Furthermore, I looked at how the sports department related to the Coolville Cats, a WNBA team located in the city. I also studied documents that pertained to the organization. For instance, I looked at the results of a recent readership survey. I read several articles on the history of the Courier. I read the Courier each day during my field work, and I looked at microfilm of the paper's coverage of the Cats in 1997 and 1998. The main area of study, however, was the 1999 WNBA season. Through all these avenues, I gained a better understanding of how the sports department functions on a daily basis, and where the WNBA fits into that scenario.

My main job involved shadowing Todd, the Cats beat reporter, as he covered the team's home games during July and August 1999. The Courier's sports editor arranged for me to receive press passes for the team's 11 home games during that time. I also attended one Cats game

played in another WNBA city. During games, I sat on press row with print reporters. After games, I entered the home and visiting team locker rooms, where I observed and conducted interviews. I also attended half a dozen practices at which I conducted interviews and observed Todd's relationship with the team. I combined my field work at the arena with participant observation at the newspaper.

The main setting in which I immersed myself was the Courier's sports department. This involved attending meetings in which coverage was discussed, shadowing copy editors as they decided where to place stories, and generally "hanging around" the newsroom. I observed, listened to and talked with people as they went about their daily tasks. This gave me an idea of the entire process of coverage, from assignment to final edit. It also allowed me to understand the unspoken rules of the culture. All the participants were aware of my role as a researcher before interviews began. Informed consent was obtained.

I incorporated three types of interview: structured, semistructured, and ethnographic. Structured interviews were scheduled in advance with a set of topics to be discussed. Some of the topics included the following: description of the participant's job, expectations of other participants, impressions of the relationships between the Courier and the Cats, and their perceptions of the paper's coverage of the team. I tape recorded and transcribed 13 of these interviews.

Interviewees from the newspaper sports department included reporters who had covered the Cats, the sports editor and two assistant editors, and two layout artists. I also interviewed the paper's executive editor, the assistant managing editors in charge of sports and news, the ombudsman, the former sports editor, a photographer, and a metro reporter. Interviewees from

the team included the director of communications and operations, the manager of communications, and the team's public relations intern.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with players, coaches, and league officials. I refer to them as semistructured because they fall somewhere between structured and ethnographic interviews in several respects. They were unplanned, but they were not totally spontaneous. The recording of the discussions, in my opinion, gave them a less natural feel than their ethnographic counterparts. I conducted 13 of these. Topics included the participants' feelings about the media and the differences between the media's role in the WNBA and other venues in which the participants had worked.

Ethnographic interviews were those that developed during participant observation. Hundreds of these spontaneous conversations occurred with fans, players, journalists, coaches, team staff members, and league representatives. They were less formal than the structured or semistructured interviews and lasted anywhere from less than a minute to more than an hour. I did not record these, nor did I take notes during the interviews. This setting allowed a more unconstrained discussion than would have been possible in a taped interview. The spontaneity of these discussions not only led to new questions, it helped me gain the trust of the people I worked with in the field. As well as transcriptions, I relied on field notes and journal entries to keep track of my observations and interpretations.

Findings

The following is a mixture of descriptions, quotations, and interpretations. While quotes have been edited lightly to promote clarity and confidentiality, I have attempted to keep them as close to the original as possible. Edits have been limited to deleting such utterances as "ers" and "ums," except in cases where it seemed the words added to the quote. I also edited out references

to specific teams, players, or cities to ensure confidentiality. Quotes are italicized to reinforce the fact that it is the participants who are speaking. Conversely, the Roman type symbolizes interpretations made by the author. Although I did discuss the issues with the participants — often at length — the final interpretations are mine alone.

The Coolville Courier's sports department definitely harbored its share of sexism, but things are changing. Many of the people on the staff have been employed for some time, and several have a traditional view of sports that includes football, baseball, hockey, boxing, and basketball — men's basketball. Dennis, sports editor from 1990 to 1998, described the improving attitude toward women's sports in general during his tenure:

> *Lynn: How would you say the sports department covers women's sports in general?*
>
> *Dennis: When I became sports editor in 1990, it was a priority. I wouldn't say it was an urgent priority. And I don't think that set us apart from too many papers around the country. I think we covered them as well as most people. I don't think we did a particularly good job of it. … But we did gradually shift the emphasis, and if it was 90-10 on men's sports versus women's sports, then we moved it to 80-20, and we moved it to 75-25. We tried very hard to raise the profile of women in the sports section. And it was not universally well received on the staff. Some people thought we were bowing to surveys and focus groups and that type of thing that indicate that that's what you oughta do. And I disagreed. I thought it was one way to try to bring new readers into the paper and specifically into our section. … We're getting there. We're not where we should be. But I think we are much farther along than we were five years ago, certainly. I think there's been progress made every year. And it's just, it's a mindset, as much as anything*

else. You know, there are a lot of people here who ... worked either at the Courier or at other newspapers 20, 30, 40 years ago, when things were different.

Dennis' remarks show that no matter how much the sports editor pursues change, he cannot do it alone. At the Courier, it has taken some sports staffers longer than others to accept the fact that women's sports are here to stay. This was evident the first two seasons of the WNBA's existence, when design editors often refused to follow Dennis' directions on where to place stories. Craig, who covered the Cats in 1997 and 1998, often found himself working against a wall of tradition.

Craig: I ran into a lot of opposition in the sports department about, "ah, it's women's basketball." A lot of men won't — for some reason [they] seemed threatened by it and wanted it to go away. And, you know, I was just tryin' to get 'em good coverage. It was, it was like pulling teeth a lot just to get something A, on the front page, and B, prominently displayed. They just wanted to minimize it, and that was a challenge for me as a reporter.

My own reading of the microfilm from the 1997 and 1998 seasons confirmed Craig's statement. The Cats rarely occupied the lead art or story position in the first two seasons, and Craig's stories ran inside more often than Todd's in 1999. Much of this has to do with the way the section is created on a daily basis.

Daily Planning

While Paul, the Courier's executive editor, had ultimate control over the paper's news content, the sports section maintained a significant level of autonomy. Charlie, the assistant managing editor in charge of sports, reported directly to Paul. Alex, the sports editor, answered to Charlie (see Figure 1). The following description of how the news came to be is based solely

on the Courier's sports section. Other departments, such as features and metro, operated differently.

Because the major professional leagues and collegiate conferences released their schedules months in advance, Alex and his staff did not have to worry about many surprises. Most of the planning was done before the season started. This was true for the WNBA. Several breaking news events did occur during the summer of 1999, including the selection of two Cats to the WNBA all-star game. Aside from the occasional breaking news, the biggest concern for editors on a daily basis was deciding which stories were most important. To that end, the key editors met each afternoon to discuss the next day's section. The attendees included Alex (the sports editor), Charlie (the managing editor in charge of sports), one copy editor, the "slot" or design editor, and the day editor, who ran the meeting.

The day editor's chief task was to create a budget of possible stories for the next day's paper. Trent, the assistant editor for assignments, usually filled this role. Monica also served as day editor during my time in Coolville. They arrived at work at about 10 a.m. and spent most of the day reading wire service stories and checking with local reporters to get an idea of what was happening. If news broke, the day editor alerted Alex, Charlie, and any reporters who needed to be told. This process resulted in a detailed budget that included articles which the day editor deemed worthy of play on the front page of the section, as well as stories and filler for every conceivable sport.

Each day, five to seven stories made it to the front page, which usually included a mix of local and national news. Staff-written feature stories had the best chance of making the cover. One story per day was designated the "centerpiece," and as the name suggests, this story occupied the center position on the sports front. Decisions were never made without discussion,

and anyone attending the meeting was given the opportunity to voice his or her opinions. Once the staff became familiar with me and realized my expertise on the WNBA, they welcomed my opinions. Decisions regarding the front page were made by consensus. That is, unless Charlie or Alex were adamant about something. This did not happen often, but it did occur during the 1999 Women's World Cup soccer tournament.

> *Charlie: I pretty much will allow ... the sports editor and the other editors in the section and the copy editors to make the decision. But if I strongly disagree, I'll step in. And I will impose my will if I just think they are making ... uh, bad decisions. A recent example of that is I don't feel that unless I had stepped in that our coverage of World Cup soccer.... I felt every time the U.S. team played for sure that we should have that on the front of the sports section and give it decent treatment. ... I think there were others that either just didn't think about it or weren't concerned.*

During the 1999 WNBA season, there was an unwritten rule that each time the Cats played a game, the story would run on the front page of the next day's section. Often, it was the centerpiece. Todd's feature stories usually made the cover as well. In addition to the articles, home games were supplemented with staff photographs, often on the front but sometimes inside. When available, Associated Press photographs were used with out-of-town games. Finally, each front-page game story was accompanied by a color graphic logo that included the score of the game. This routine was similar to the one used when the Coolville Cougars of the NBA played in the winter. The only difference was that Courier reporters always traveled with the Cougars, while Todd rarely traveled with the Cats.

After determining the content of the front page, the editors quickly divided the rest of the articles among the section. Whatever WNBA stories or jumps went inside usually were placed

on the same page as the NBA news. Once the section was budgeted and the meeting adjourned, the slot went to work.

At the Courier, the slot editor designed the section. This involved deciding what stories were placed where on the page and how much space was devoted to each article. Because only one designer worked per night, the slot had the majority of the control over how stories were played. Josh worked the slot three nights per week.

Josh: Every newspaper structures it differently. At the Courier, they give a lot of autonomy to my job, to the slot person's job. We have news judgement discussions, but basically it's left at, here are the stories that are going on the front page: five, six, four stories, seven stories, whatever it is. And the design of the page and how the page is played is left completely at the discretion of the slot person....

Lynn: You have a lot of power, some might think, in that position. You know, to say, well, you can tell people this is the most important story of the day.

J: Right. I guess that's true. I guess that's true. I guess that's one of the reasons that I, I like what I do and I like the way things are structured. I mean, it's my own little teeny niche of authority, I guess.

That authority is what led some people, including Craig, to think that slot editors used personal bias against the WNBA when designing pages during the Cats first two seasons.

Lynn: You kind of play up the fact that you don't like women's basketball. Is that kind of just a way to let off steam, or?

Josh: I do it to get under the skin of the people who are like really like passionate about it. I would do any number of other things to people who are passionate about other

things. It's just like, I get razzed about my interest in golf. They razz me like, "golf is not a sport, and who cares"? I mean, so. That's just like the repartee of the department.

I agree with Josh when he says everyone in the department is ridiculed for something. As a former layout editor, I also think that every editor is affected by his or her biases in some way. Whether it means putting the auto racing inside the section (as I often did when laying out the sports section) or giving less space to a WNBA game than to a golf tournament. Josh seemed to be aware of his bias, however, and I think he took it into consideration when he worked.

Veteran Coverage

One way the WNBA was gaining a foothold in the section was the fact that two experienced reporters, Craig and Todd, covered the Cats. Newspapers usually put untested reporters on unimportant beats, but the Cats merited a seasoned writer in their first year. Craig had covered the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, and the women's college basketball championships. His contacts in the NBA came in handy because of the connection between the two leagues. Many of the people in upper-level management with the NBA's Coolville Cougars also work for the Cats, and the teams share an arena.

When the WNBA announced in 1996 that a team would be located in Coolville, upper management did not create a new position to cover the team. As is often the case when new teams are added to a city's sports landscape, Dennis was forced to move someone from another beat. Craig was a sensible choice because he had been covering the NBA.

Dennis: Craig seemed like the best candidate in that he knew basketball, appreciated women's sports, certainly was not going to uh.... He would treat it as if it were an important beat, which it is. And we thought, I thought that was important, too. I would be lying if I said there weren't some chauvinists who uh, won't acknowledge the importance

of women's sports. I knew Craig would not be like that, he would come in with the right attitude, as Todd has carried as well. It's not a secondary sport in their mind, and I think they convey that in their writing to the readers.

Like Craig, Todd was a veteran reporter. In his nearly 20 years at the Courier, Todd covered everything from high schools to college football to the NFL. He is considered one of the best writers on the sports staff. This fact was not lost on Josh, the slot editor who rarely hid his dislike for the WNBA.

Josh: I'm interested in good stories. There could be a great Cats story, a great story about anything. It's like, if it's a compelling story, it really doesn't matter. It transcends the sport. And the fact that we have Todd writing Cats stuff, you know, arguably the best writer on the staff. With the best ideas, and you know, as long as he's not writing about the X's and O's of the Cats. ... I mean, I make decisions based on who's writing a story, too. If Todd's writing a Cats story, and someone else that I don't think is as talented is writing a Cats story. I have to make decisions oftentimes before I even see the story, and I'm gonna say that hey, I know that Todd's gonna give me somethin' here worth reading, while I may not feel that way about somebody else.

Although some copy editors continue to voice their dislike for the WNBA, the anti-Cats sentiment Craig dealt with seems to have waned, at least according to Jeri, the sports columnist.

Lynn: How have you noticed the coverage the Courier's had of the Cats?

Jeri: I think it's really improved dramatically this season. In terms of much more concerted effort toward more substantive coverage. The quality of the writing, the presentation's much better. I think that uh, a real strong backing from upper management, and that's been positive.

L: You mean like the executive editor?

J: And the publisher. I think in great measure. And Alex as well. [Executive Editor] Paul is a huge backer of the Cats. Last year was a little bit more of a struggle. Any time you introduce a new sport, a new entity, a new enterprise like that, there's always gonna be some resistance. There's a skepticism, I think, that's just natural of anything. Whether it be a women's league or any other league. And I think there was some of that here the first two years. The fact that it's a women's pro league and so many floundered I think added to enhance the skepticism. You're also dealing with a lot of people in sports that have very traditional sports backgrounds, somewhat resistant to anything that's new or different.

... So I think that you know, there was still some resistance last year. I noticed that the stories weren't played as, as dominantly or prominently as they should have been. You know. But this year it's been a major change.

A New Game Plan

Much of that change stems from the arrival of Alex as the sports editor in January 1999. Organization is key to the way a section operates, but so is personal influence (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). When Alex left his job on the metro desk to become deputy sports editor in 1996, he believed he could make a difference.

Alex: I really felt like it was a no-lose situation for me cause I really didn't have a sports background, but I knew that the morale back here was just terrible at the time. And the perception — at least from the top management — of this section was not very good. And so I felt like if I go back there and screw up nobody would notice. Try to do something. And I think I've, I think I've improved the morale. I mean I think people think that at

least there's a game plan. They may not all agree with it, but there's a game plan that we're trying to achieve.

Alex tried to move the sports department in a new direction. He wanted the Courier to focus on the local teams: the Cats and their male counterpart, the Cougars. That meant treating the WNBA like a bona fide professional sport. Trying to change the attitude in the sports section was not easy, but Alex has made some headway.

In 1999, Todd's game stories, which ran between 15 and 20 inches, began on the cover and jumped to an inside page. His notebooks, which contained several small items about the team or the league, ran inside with the jumps. The box scores — containing statistics from the games — also ran inside with both home and away games. Jeri, one of the Courier's sports columnists, wrote on about half the Cats home games. Her columns, like those of the other sports columnists, began on the cover and jumped inside. The WNBA standings ran each day of the season on the "scoreboard" page, which contained the standings, schedules, and results for professional, college, and high school sports. Devoting so much space to the WNBA is a key step for the section if it is to take women's professional sports more seriously.

Even Josh, who still ridiculed the WNBA in a fun-loving way, appeared to alter his attitude. About halfway through the 1999 season, he seemed to put away his bias when planning the section. During an afternoon meeting, the editors discussed what to put on the front page. The decision came down to a regional golf story or a feature on one of the WNBA's top rookies, who was in town to play against the Cats for the first time. Both were staff-written stories. Josh, a golf fanatic, voted for the WNBA story.

Alex added that Josh and Pete, another slot editor who often ridiculed the WNBA among sports staffers, defended increased coverage when confronted outside the department.

Alex: I've heard people here, well, they'll criticize, you know, like Josh, every now and then, and maybe Pete. Actually, Pete won't do that anymore. He's funny. He's adopted it. It's like his. He blows it out, makes it look nice. But I've heard them kinda question me or question or make some smart comment to Todd. But at the same time, they'll go out there to metro and somebody who's not in sports will say something, and then they'll defend what we're doing. They'll say "no, you don't understand." And so it's kind of interesting.

Alex's comment shows that while Josh and Pete are vocal about their feelings, they do have the department's best interest in mind. Judging by the coverage I saw, and the conversations I had, I think the both men were following the "game plan" that Alex introduced to the section.

Attracting Female Readers

One thing Alex and his staff are trying to do is bring more women into the section. A reader survey in 1999 revealed that 74 percent of the section's readers were men. Although most of the sports department has come on board, Alex still gets opposition from upper management, in particular Charlie, the assistant managing editor in charge of sports. Shortly after we met, Charlie asked me a question that I have struggled with ever since. He wanted to know if I thought publishing stories about women would attract more female readers to the section. I believe that well-written, well-reported stories about women will bring in female readers. More and more girls and women are participating in sports than ever before, and they might want to read about others like them. It might sound prejudiced, but I think it is true that we like to read about people like us. If I see a story about a female athlete, I at least give the story a chance. I do not do that with every story about male athletes. Perhaps it is because there were so few of those stories in the past, or perhaps it is because I am a female athlete myself.

When I posed Charlie's question to journalists at the paper, I found a difference in the responses from men and women.

Phillip, the paper's ombudsman, said good stories are what matters.

Phillip: I think despite the advances the Courier has made that the sports section still has a ways to go to be a truly diverse sports section. But I also don't think that means you have to cover a lot of women's sports as some sort of token answer to that. I do believe that women, like men, are interested in good sports stories.

The Courier's coverage of the Cats did not seem token to me, but it might have appeared that way to others. This is where standpoint plays a role. As a fan of women's basketball and a feminist, I think there is a definite need for more coverage of the sport. I also recognize certain code words — like "token" or "political correctness" — when I hear them. Phillip comes from the standpoint of a middle-aged man, and he is not even a sports fan. Josh, who espoused a similar view to Phillip's, is a sports fan but not a feminist.

Lynn: Do they ever talk about, "Well, we need to get more women to read the paper?" Stuff like that. "We need to do certain things to do that?"

Josh: Yeah, I've heard those things, and they're occasionally bandied about. You know, I mean that's not my interest. I'm, I'm trying to put out the best sports section for the broadest readership possible. I don't have an agenda. Obviously the Courier does, and the Courier's very politically correct and you know, diversity in every sense of the word. And I don't know if they're trying to broaden their readership base or you know to ultimately make more money, more subscribers, I have no idea. But those are not decisions that, that really enter into my news judgment. ... I mean I look at readers as readers, I don't look at them as male-female, black-white or anything else.

While Phillip mentioned "token" coverage, Josh used the more modern term, "politically correct." They seem to be saying the same thing, though. If we write good stories, people will read. There is a deeper meaning, though. Are "good" stories — regardless of the sex of the athletes — the same as "qualified" job candidates — regardless of skin color? Society's dominant ideology tells people that certain acts, no matter how well intentioned, are merely "token" or "P.C." This hegemony affects how the individuals think about the world, and it influences how they do their jobs.

This view was not unanimous, though. Rene compared the coverage of women to that of African Americans. If all the photographs in the paper were of white people, how were African Americans supposed to relate to the publication? In order for women and girls to take an interest, Rene said, they must see themselves in the section.

> *Rene: We want to attract women readers in our sports section. And what will attract women readers, even if they aren't fans of the WNBA? If they see pictures of women routinely in the sports section, they will feel more comfortable in that sports section.*

Pressure from inside the paper was supplemented by the opinions of readers. Alex received his share of letters, calls, and e-mails questioning the paper's increased emphasis on the Cats. In fact, during the summer of 1999, a battle of sorts took place in the section's letters to the editor column. Two male readers wrote in to voice their disapproval of what they considered pandering to the WNBA. The following week, the paper printed five letters — from men and women — praising the Cats and the Courier's coverage.

Despite the angry tone of some readers, Alex said he was adamant about his plan for the sports section.

Alex: There's some readers that would question you know, pulling [the Cats] out, making them a centerpiece, making them the lead story over baseball, for instance. At this point, I will listen to it, but I haven't heard a compelling argument or seen anything that could change my mind about what we're trying to do.

While the move toward change was slow, several factors worked in Alex's favor. First, there were the calls, letters, and e-mails he received from fans of women's basketball. Some of these readers were new to the section, as Alex found out after the Cats lost a big game.

Alex: It was interesting cause yesterday I got about four or five e-mails and three or four phone calls from female readers who were really upset by our game story, Todd's last game story. And I, I kinda dismissed 'em because they were like "Oh, that was too harsh" and "You're too rough on 'em." And I kind of dismissed 'em. ... I called them back and I wanted more information. And I realized that this is the first time they ever read a sports section. ... They didn't understand why we weren't behind the home team, you know, real positive and everything, don't point out any blemishes. 'Cause I was asking about, you know, our coverage of the [NFL], our coverage of the Cougars, and they obviously hadn't read any of that. So it was a curious thing.

... You know, some of 'em had grown up elsewhere, some of 'em had been in Coolville. They all read the Courier but never read the sports section. They got caught up in the Cats this season. So it was encouraging in that, I mean, that's kind of our goal is to bring in new readers. But, I'm not sure that these women are gonna keep reading the sports section. A couple of them said they did pick up on some other stories — [an NFL] story and one story we did on [a player] and his battle with cancer. And one mentioned that. Outdoors stories she liked. Seems like she's, she's hooked. She's a sports reader.

It seems Alex learned from this experience. He understood — as Rene did — that stories about the WNBA might just bring readers into the sports section. If this was not apparent from the correspondence he received, all Alex had to do was look across the newsroom.

New Readers in the Newsroom

Even some newsroom staffers got hooked simply by following the Cats. One female metro reporter told me she had never read a sports section until she started following the Cats. At least a dozen women who work in the newsroom — none of them in sports — began reading the section after becoming fans of the team. These "newsroom fans" have been pushing Alex and the executive editor to step up coverage of the WNBA for two years.

A trio of "newsroom fans" took their complaints to Paul, the paper's executive editor, during the 1998 season. Sandra, a photographer, was one of the three women who complained about what they saw as inadequate coverage.

> *Sandra: They were kind of kicking it to the curb a little bit. The stories were running, at best, in the bottom right corner of the sports page. Rarely was it their lead art with the Cats. You'd get a brush off by a lot of the layout guys when you talked to them about it. And um, so we were just saying, you know, "what's goin' on here? Why are you allowing that to happen with this team?" ... And he was just like, "well, we'll wait and see. And we'll try to work against the bias" that we believe that existed with a lot of the people who were doing layout. And um, things seemed to get better. Though I don't know how much it did, but it let them know that there are people out there, watching them. [laughs]*

The fact that so many women — readers and staff members — became passionate about the Cats seemed to answer Charlie's question. Good writing about a women's team involved in a

compelling playoff race lured female readers into the section. Despite the new readers, however, some things still have not changed.

Money Matters

Alex said there were many issues he would like to pursue — including the racial makeup of crowds at professional sporting events and homophobia in the WNBA. But funding is a bigger issue.

Alex: Again, it's a question of having the time and the resources.

The sports section's travel budget, which was about $120,000 in 1999, had not increased in four years. Alex was counting on an increase in 2000 because it was an Olympic year, but he still needed to pull money from somewhere else to improve WNBA coverage. In 1999, Todd traveled to five away games, and stringers covered the other 11.

Alex: We went a little bit over budget. I'm worried, I'll have to make it up somewhere.

He said he hoped to make it up by not attending the World Series, an event the paper has covered for the past several years. Increased revenue in 2000 allowed Alex to send a reporter on the road for more games in the 2000 season. Although Alex had trouble at first convincing the paper's publisher that it was worth it, he did get an extra $16,000, which he planned to use to travel with the Cats.

Alex: Now, when Todd's on the road, per game, it costs me about $400 more. … There's no way of actually measuring it, but is Todd's story $400 better than this [correspondent's] story? … But over the course of the long run I think you really develop the beat guy, you really establish credibility with that team. At least more access. And there's a few readers — maybe 10, 15 percent — that notice whether

it says Courier staff writer or somethin' else. And I think that group expects you, if it's your home team you should be there. I, I believe that too.

Conclusion

The data I gathered in my two months in Coolville suggest that Alex is genuine about his plans to make the Cats a significant beat, second only to the NBA's Cougars. The data also make clear that the reporters covering the Cats — Todd, Miguel, and Jeri — all considered the beat important. The fact that Miguel got his foot in the door as the league beat writer in 1999 said much about Alex's devotion to the Cats. Rene and Trent — the assistant sports editors — also seem to agree with Alex. Although several of the copy editors and slot editors are openly critical of the WNBA, they are professional enough to put their feelings aside during working hours.

The biggest roadblock to Alex's plan seemed to be money. There is only so much to go around, and longtime readers want to see their favorite male sports in the paper. The fact that Alex convinced the publisher to increase the budget in 2000 shows the importance of both the individual and organizational levels of influence. Alex's individual persistence could only go so far, but combined with more money from the newspaper as a whole, it got the Cats more coverage.

There is no escaping Charlie's question of whether or not covering women's sports attracts female readers. Reader correspondence and the emergence of "newsroom fans," however, are good signs for the WNBA. The data suggest that covering women's sports can indeed attract female readers. Another important issue is the makeup of the sports department itself. A certain sexism, or anti-change attitude, persists in the department, and a newsroom as a whole. With a 6:1 male to female ratio, there always will be some divisions along gender lines. Those divisions are clearly changing, as more men realize women's sports are here to stay. When

the 2000 season began, a female reporter was helping Miguel cover the Cats. This was in addition to Jeri, the female columnist. Nevertheless, until there is a societal shift in how women's sports are portrayed, Alex will continue to fight against the tide.

A bigger question, perhaps, is whether or not research of this type matters at all. As a critical researcher, I believe it does. It is my hope that this research can help the sports department at The Coolville Courier improve its coverage of the WNBA. Furthermore, this research can help educators prepare students for the real world of sports journalism. If neophyte reporters understand the conflicts that exist at one paper, they might be better able to counter those problems wherever they work. If a societal shift is to occur, it must incorporate young journalists.

While this study is an appropriate place to begin looking at this issue, much research remains to be done. One of the things I plan to look at next is how the Courier developed and nurtured its relationship with the Cats over the first three seasons of the league's existence. I also plan to examine the paper's coverage — and non-coverage — of the WNBA's homophobia. Another avenue of study might involve the role the paper's World Wide Web site has played in bringing WNBA fans and female readers to the sports section. Finally, this study looks at only one team and one publication. While many of the same themes and issues are at play across the nation, this study is not intended to be generalized. Future research might look at how other newspapers, television stations, and web sites have fostered ties with the WNBA.

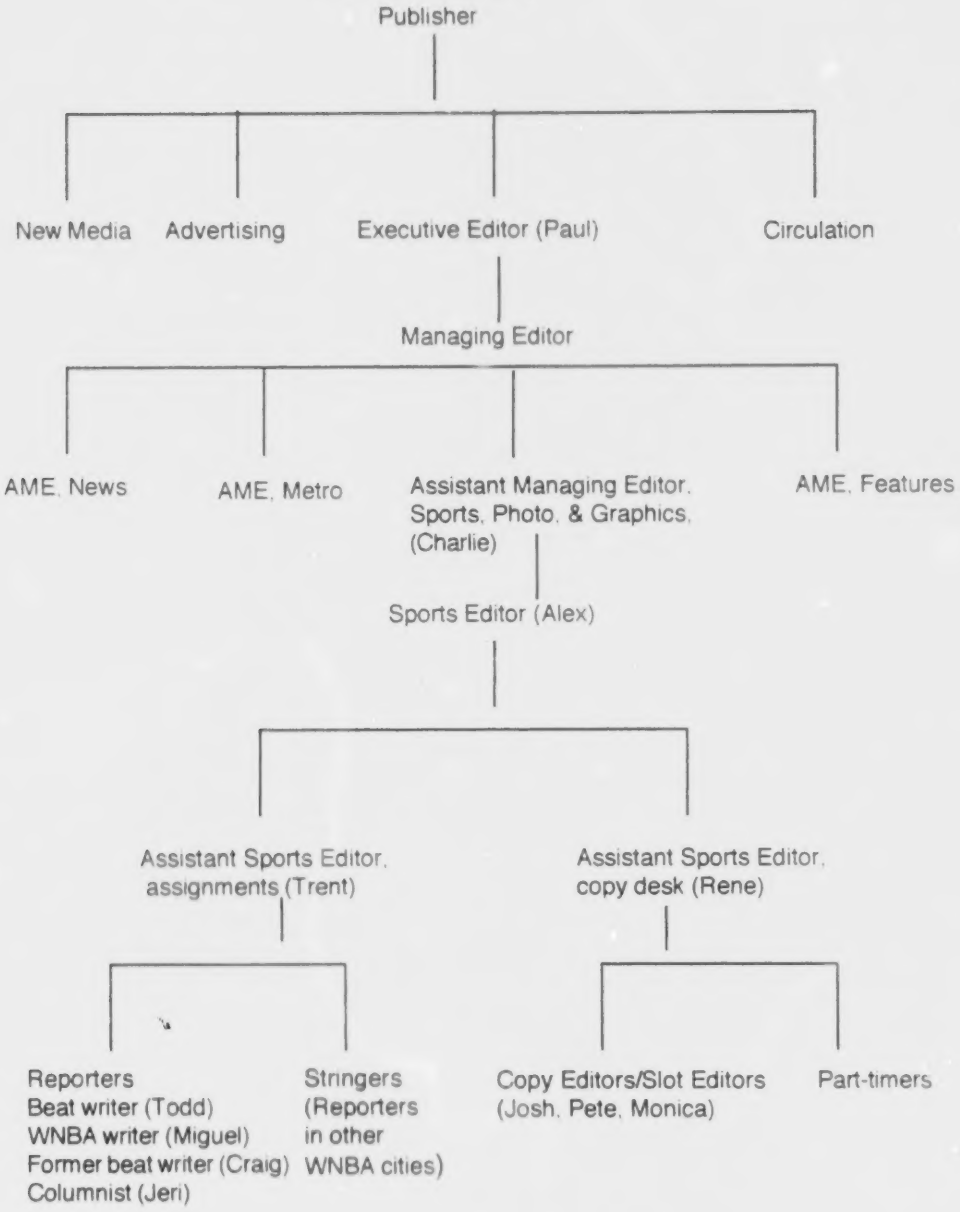
The implications of this work are about more than basketball. The issue of source relationships is vital for all journalists. Other studies might focus on the relationships between the press and politicians or entertainers. Much research has been done on the press' role in society, but what about the role of the sports department specifically? Sports traditionally has

been seen as a field of entertainment, but that has changed in recent years. As sports have gained attention, they have become big businesses, and they also have impacted society. How has the change in sports mirrored that of society, and how has the press reacted to that change? These are all important questions for journalism researchers.

Figure 1

The Coolville Courier

Staff Hierarchy



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A Woman's Place:

Newspaper Advice Columns in the Wake of the Nineteenth Amendment --

A Case Study

by

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-Abstract-

The Nineteenth Amendment, granting women the vote, was just one manifestation of the social, political, legal, and economic changes that roiled the United States during the 1920s. Its adoption served as a catalyst questioning the traditional roles filled by men and women.

In a world where such customary sources of support and information as kin and local community were weakening, newspaper advice columnists filled the void as objective, sophisticated authorities. This study examines more than a decade of national advice columns, which appeared in a Midwestern newspaper in the wake of the Amendment, and finds them to be both a promoter of new ideas and a reflector of reality.

by

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A Woman's Place:

Advice Columns in the Wake of the Nineteenth Amendment –

A Case Study

Newspaper advice columns and the Nineteenth Amendment - what a combination! What should women do once they obtained the right to vote? Advice columns would tell them. What role were women to fill in the home once they could assert their rights for more options? Advice columns would tell them. And, what would be their legal, political, economic, and social positions within society? Advice columns would tell them.

The adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment on August 26, 1920, was a signal of transition for both women and men. On the one hand, critics of women's suffrage predicted that the Nineteenth Amendment would bring grievous consequences - broken marriages (or worse, no marriages) and broken homes; children would suffer. On the other hand, suffrage supporters contended that the ability of twenty-seven million women to vote would bring unprecedented benefits -- a more moral system of governing the country. Caught in the middle were women of all types who had their own expectations of women's roles. Some women wished to continue to live as they had before August 26th. Others felt that once they had the right to vote, their place in the home and in society would be equal to men's. In this changeover, what could society expect from women? What could they expect from themselves?[1]

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[1] Carl N. Degler, At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 328-61; Sara M. Evans, Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, and Singapore: Free Press Paperbacks, 1997), 152-56, 164-73; Paula Baker, "The Domestication of Politics: Women and American Political Society,

Many women turned to advice columns for answers to their questions. Advice columnists were considered knowledgeable, worldly people. They were authorities to whom women turned for objective advice that they felt they could not get from such traditional sources of knowledge and support as family and friends.

Just as traditional customs, priorities, and certainties were being challenged in the home and local communities in 1920, great changes were happening in the United States nationally, as well: For the first time, more people lived in urban areas than rural.[2] The country had one foot in its agrarian past, but was stepping into an industrialized future. Government's role was changing, becoming more involved in people's private lives. People struggled to adjust to the changing society and economy, while maintaining core values and beliefs.[3] One locale, the Lansing area in Michigan, was a typical microcosm of the conflicting forces that the country as a whole was experiencing. It was positioned in the heart of rich agricultural land. Yet it was a cradle of industry, in particular, nascent auto manufacturers. It was the state capital, and was an educational center. So in the Lansing area, there existed an interplay of the forces that were roiling the country: blue collar and white collar, unschooled and educated, urban and rural, industrial and agricultural, public (governmental) and private.[4]

To gain insight into contemporary conceptions of appropriate female familial and societal roles after the Nineteenth Amendment, this study examined the coverage of and

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1780-1920," The American Historical Review 89:3 (June 1984): 642-47; Louise A. Tilly, "Women, Work, and Citizenship," International Labor and Working-Class History 52 (Fall 1997): 1-4, 16-22.

[2] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, vol. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931), 8.

[3] Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," 645-46; Evans, Born for Liberty, 173, 175-96, 204-10.

for women that appeared in the Lansing newspaper, the State Journal,[5] during the decade following the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment.[6] Throughout this period, the newspaper always had a page of general letters and editorials, and often contained a women's page as well. Since the editorial and feature columns provided the most consistent coverage of women, the study focused on them. All the columns that the study found were nationally syndicated – there were none local. So these columns do not specifically say what the local people thought. Rather, they provide insight into the ideas of national authorities that local editors thought would resonate with their readers. The columns are a window onto national issues, filtered through a process of local selection.[7]

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[4] Sallie M. Manassah, David Thomas, and James F. Wallington, Lansing: Capital, Campus, and Cars, with a foreword by Governor James Blanchard (East Lansing, Michigan: Contemporary Image Adv., Ltd., 1986), 44-56, 128-39.

[5] There was another newspaper, the Lansing Capital News, published in Lansing from 1921-1932 (it was later absorbed by the Lansing State Journal). It was not used in the study because its issues, only available on microfilm, were too faint to be read.

The State Journal's masthead did not bear circulation figures at this time. A promotion for the Woman's Section, on June 18, 1930, claimed a daily average circulation of over 44,000. However, an announcement in the July 9, 1931 issue gave the daily circulation, per the Audit Bureau of Circulations, as 42,514. The latter figure, from the heart of the Depression, might well have been higher in previous years.

[6] No studies could be found that examined newspaper coverage (or advice columns) concerning women's roles in the wake of the Nineteenth Amendment. A few studies examined coverage of the Nineteenth Amendment specifically. See, for example, Lucinda D. Davenport, "Coverage of the Nineteenth Amendment in Rural Iowa," Paper presented to the History Division of the Association of Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1989; Anne Messerly Cooper, "Suffrage as News: Coverage of the Nineteenth Amendment," American Journalism1, no. 1 (Summer 1983), 75-91; Linda Lavier Smith, "Coverage or Cover Up: A Comparison of Newspaper Coverage of the Nineteenth Amendment and the Equal Rights Amendment," Paper presented to the Committee on the Status of Women, AEJMC, 1984. And a few studies examined coverage of women's suffrage generally. See for example, Sherilyn Cox Bennion, "Early Western Publications Expose Women's Suffrage Cries," Matrix (Summer 1979); Lauren Kessler, "The Idea of Women Suffragists and the Portland Oregonian," Journalism Quarterly 57 (Winter 1980), 597-605.

[7] These columns were directed at an audience that enjoyed some prosperity: those who were comfortably working-class, middle-class, or upper-class. People would have to have a certain income to buy a paper. They would also need to be literate, need to have the leisure to read, and need to have enough lack of reserve that they would not be affronted by having people's relational problems aired in a public forum. The topics were often decidedly middle-class: My husband says that I must quit my job if I want to keep house for us. The women described in these columns were often those for whom work was a matter of choice. These columns were not for women who were heads of households or who were so poor that they must work. Neither were they for those who were so exhausted or overworked that they had no time to read, nor for those who had to leave school early to help support the family, and so did not read or write

Many of the columns from this period dealt with such timeless areas as how to attract members of the opposite sex, how to win and keep a spouse, how to prepare nutritious meals with little time and financial expenditures. Although these are of interest for their eternal character, the study chose to concentrate instead on those columns that dealt with women's and society's adjustments to women's continuing and evolving roles.[8]

Early Columns: Laying the Groundwork . . .

Well-known author Christine Frederick extolled the science of homemaking in books[9] and in a national daily column that appeared in the State Journal in 1920. Most of her columns dealt with such topics as planning menus for the week ahead, keeping cool by cooking with electricity, taking the drudgery out of doing laundry, and selecting

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well. The women's work in these columns is mainly white collar, service occupations (office work, retail clerking). This is not the world of factories, domestic service, scrubbing floors, taking in sewing, doing piecework at home. Chronicling the most vulnerable elements in a society is always problematic. However, although these columns are certainly an imperfect reflection of contemporary society, there is indication that in this time of change, many people were looking for guidance in dealing with unprecedented modern demands. The columns spoke to these needs. U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fourteenth Census of the United States: 1920, vol. 3 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922), 499; Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, 8, 522; Manassah, Thomas, and Wallington, Lansing, 44-56; Degler, At Odds, 29-30; James R. McGovern, "The American Woman's Pre-World War I Freedom in Manners and Morals," Journal of American History 55 (2): 320.

[8] The study wished to examine coverage of and for women across a range of months and years. Thus, it derived a sample beginning with August 1920 (the month and year that the Nineteenth Amendment became law), then advanced thirteen months at a time (e.g., September 1921), until each of the twelve calendar months had been studied. The study examined all columns giving women advice from August 1920, September 1921, October 1922, November 1923, December 1924, January 1925, February 1926, March 1927, April 1928, May 1929, June 1930, and July 1931. During this time, the State Journal was an evening paper published six days a week – there was no Sunday paper.

[9] Cathy N. Davidson and Linda Wagner-Martin, eds., The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), s.v. "Advice Books," by Nicole Tonkovich.

aluminum cookware.[10] But occasionally Frederick abandoned traditional housewife concerns for more controversial subjects.

One column asked – and answered – the question "Should wives earn money?" She began by asserting that many people objected to wives working for pay, although they did not question their working for philanthropies, or even to their frittering away their time. Nor did they question poor women leaving their homes and children to scrub the homes of the rich. So it was not women's working, per se, with which they disagreed. It was only if they posed a challenge to traditional male domains by holding down a well-salaried position. Frederick said that she could better understand the objection if all wives had small children who needed their nurture and care; but that was only a small proportion of the total number of wives at any one time. She then noted that not all women were suited to domesticity. She continued:

> Modern inventions have lightened the household burdens to such an extent that thousands of women actually find little to do, in caring for a small home, and overseeing the education of a child or two. It is natural for them, therefore, if they have ability and energy, to use all their talents, and seek financial compensation for them. Often mothers are eager to add to the family earnings in order to send children to college, or give them advantages. But even if they are not actuated by such unselfish motives, they surely have a right to work and be paid for honest labor, as a man is.

She concluded by reminding readers of how the war brought millions of women into gainful trades – some of which were in grueling heavy industries that they might have been glad to relinquish. But now that some women had had a taste of working for pay, they wished to continue – and should be encouraged to do so.[11]

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[10] Christine Frederick, "Catering for the Home," Lansing State Journal. 5 August 1920, 5; idem, "Cool Cooking – Electricity," Lansing State Journal. 9 August 1920, 5; idem, "Wisdom of Washday," Lansing State Journal. 16 August 1920, 5; idem, "Selection of Aluminum Ware," Lansing State Journal. 31 August 1920, 5.

[11] Christine Frederick, "Should Wives Earn Money?" Lansing State Journal. 18 August 1920, 5.

This column raised several points. For many women, especially full-time homemakers, technology really did not mean less time spent in housework. In fact, it meant that she had no excuses for anything less than an immaculate house - there was a device to help with every imaginable household task. However, for those women who could get by with general tidying of rooms, technology meant that they could reorder some of their priorities: In increasing numbers, women would work a "double day" by continuing their housekeeping duties, as well as working outside the home.[12] Although technology made working outside the home more possible, was this an acceptable option to society? Frederick sought to make the argument that wives should be able to work outside the home for pay more palatable by framing it in terms of the loving mother and wife who wanted to do more for her family. Women had always worked when there was economic necessity. But now "necessity" was being redefined. Many families no longer wanted a mere subsistence survival – they aspired to a higher standard of living that additional income could provide.[13] However, even though there is the sense in this and

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[12] Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "Less Work for Mother?" American Heritage 38:6 (September/October 1987): 68-76; Julie Brines, "Economic Dependency, Gender, and the Division of Labor at Home," American Journal of Sociology 100:3 (November 1994): 652-55, 682-84; Joann Vanek, "Time Spent in Housework," in A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women, eds. and with an introduction by Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 499-506; Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "Two Washes in the Morning and a Bridge Party at Night: The American Housewife between the Wars," in Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940, Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 28, eds. and with an introduction by Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983), 177-93.

[13] Winifred D. Wandersee, "The Economics of Middle-Income Family Life: Working Women During the Great Depression," in Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940, Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 28, eds. and with an introduction by Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983), 45-56; Joan M. Jensen and Lois Scharf, "Introduction," in Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940, Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 28, eds. and with an introduction by Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983), 8.

other columns that women had access to occupations on a par with men, there was considerable sex segregation of work.[14]

Frederick contrasted the selflessness of motherhood in one column with the selfishness of the modern girl in another. In "The Mother Vote," appearing six days before the Nineteenth Amendment became law, Frederick identified herself as a suffragist who had urged women's suffrage in the belief that millions of women would be model citizens and reformers because they were mothers. She asserted that that is why corrupt politicians, fearful of this, fought suffrage. She predicted that soon women would all have the vote. Were they to become apathetic or to vote like their male contacts? She predicted that women would use their votes to preserve the good and to strive for the better. She particularly mentioned child labor, which she said the Supreme Court had permitted, but mothers would rise as one to end. She reminded readers of the reforms that women, even without the ballot, had helped to enact. She ended by urging women, when they did vote, to do so wisely, by studying every candidate, stance, and issue.[15]

Frederick's column on the mother vote was not prescient. The granting of suffrage did not lead women to act as more of a group, but, if anything, accentuated divisions and individualism. Women's communal support networks declined and did not reemerge

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[14] Degler, At Odds, 395-417; Evans, Born for Liberty, 182-85, 202; Ruth Milkman, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis: Some Lessons from the Great Depression," in A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women, eds. and with an introduction by Nancy F. Cott and Elizabeth H. Pleck (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 511-28; Frank Stricker, "Cookbooks and Law Books: The Hidden History of Career Women in Twentieth Century America," Journal of Social History 10:1 (1976): 1-3, 10-13; Jensen and Scharf, "Introduction," Decades of Discontent, 8.

[15] Christine Frederick, "The Mother Vote," Lansing State Journal. 20 August 1920, 5.

until the 1970s. Also, by the time women won the vote, it was no longer so significant as a governing force: other methods of shaping policies were more influential.[16]

Frederick's column published on August 26, 1920, the day the Nineteenth Amendment was signed into law, is a criticism of "The Modern Girl." This criticism indicates the fissure that opened between an older generation of suffragists who worked as a collective for the furtherance of all women, and a younger generation of women who were perceived (by their elders and sometime also by themselves) to glorify in individualism and to put a premium on pleasure and experience.[17] She described in detail some of the working girl's extravagances in dress and food. Frederick ended with a vignette about a pretty young woman and her beau with whom she recently had spoken. The woman declared that when she ordered from a menu, she never looked at the price. When Frederick responded that this was unfair to her male companion, the woman retorted that if he did not like it, he could stop escorting her. Frederick concluded, "The adoring youth looked as if he would commit larceny to provide fancy food for her. It is such cruel disregard for prices that makes criminals."[18]

The two columns provide a revealing contrast between the perceived actions of mothers, who will extend their care to the whole world and purify it, and of young, single women, whose self-absorption corrupts and sullies even the once blameless.

No More Questions? No Need for Advice?

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[16] Degler, At Odds, 328, 354, 436-50; Evans, Born for Liberty, 172-73, 186-96; Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," 644-46; Tilly, "Women, Work, and Citizenship," 1, 18-22.

[17] Evans, Born for Liberty, 175-77, 182-85

[18] Christine Frederick, "The Modern Girl," Lansing State Journal. 26 August 1920, 5.

From 1921 through 1925, in the months surveyed, the State Journal did not deal, in advice columns, with the complexities and change of women's roles. There was a page called "Women's Features," that included a serialized novel, Thornton Burgess stories to read to children, recipes, and crossword puzzles. During this time, the society page was filled with information on various women's clubs and organizations that worked for civic improvement, progress in education, child welfare, and charitable causes.

Family Values Challenged?

By February 1926, columnist Cynthia Grey was ready to tackle a new and controversial concept – that the traditional family might not be best for everyone, and that that traditional institution and the relationships of its members might need to be reevaluated. She began her column "Marriage Not Essential to Modern Woman's Happiness," by recounting the fairy tale of the prince who sweeps the princess off to live happily ever after. She declared that although this fanciful idea had long been out of date, it was only recently that it had been challenged. Grey reflected quite a progressive attitude. She quoted actress Blanche Yerka on the subject:

> The modern professional woman no more needs marriage to complete her happiness . . . .
>
> If marriage were the ideal state of bliss and contentment that sugary novelists who write for sentimental girls describe it to be, then, of course, there would be no choice as to its desirability.
>
> But marriage is rarely ideally happy, especially for a woman who has become accustomed to financial independence, and to pushing herself forward for the goal of fame and name.
>
> A happy marriage usually depends on the effacement of the wife's ego. And it is difficult for the professional woman who has made money and a name for herself through the development of ego, to efface it at once.

Grey concluded with the story of her friend, Irene, a successful advertising copy writer who earned so much money that she took annual European vacations, dressed well, owned her own house and car, and feted her friends whenever and wherever she liked. But she listened to custom and advice, and married. Although she did not plan to leave her husband, she realized that it had been a mistake, and that if she were single again, she would be even happier than before. Grey averred she was not trying to undermine the marital institution; she just wanted women to "stop, look, and listen" before they acted.[19]

Grey's message that marriage was not essential to woman's happiness might have been more convincing if she had used examples that were more applicable to the probable lives of the majority of her readers. In Lansing, Michigan, for example, how many readers would have won fame and fortune as actresses, or have been able to finance annual trips to Europe by writing advertising copy? Was happiness (at least on a par with that of the marital state) possible for women who worked as office workers, as retail clerks, in factories, as domestic help, as teachers, and as agricultural labor – the sorts of occupations in which most women found themselves?[20]

Grey wrote a column dealing with the importance of the home atmosphere for the success of the "business girl."[21] She claimed that much had been written and said about

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[19] Cynthia Grey, "Marriage Not Essential to Modern Woman's Happiness," Lansing State Journal. 9 February 1926, 12.

[20] Degler, At Odds, 395-417; Evans, Born for Liberty, 182-85, 202; Milkman, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis," 511-28; Stricker, "Cookbooks and Law Books,"1-3, 10-13; Jensen and Scharf, "Introduction," Decades of Discontent, 8.

[21] A convention used by all the columnists throughout the period studied was referring to women engaged in work outside the home (frequently described as office work or retail sales) as "business girls." Men in comparable work were designated as "businessmen." The use of "girl" could reflect the assumption, even if subconscious, that older women would be married and out of the labor pool. It could indicate eternal youth; on the other hand, it could ascribe immaturity. In keeping with the columnists' style, when this study paraphrases a column, it uses the terms "business girl" and "girl."

the importance of the home in nurturing and renewing the businessman, while little had been recorded about the home's importance for the business girl. But Grey believed that the home was critical to business success for either gender. She said that although there were many reports of ungrateful daughters who mistreated their families, such daughters were few. She asserted that although most girls of the day worked for their livings, they had not really been accepted as part of the business world, because the experience was still new. She said that it would take at least a century before women were accepted as an integral part of the business world. Grey stated that many families expected their daughters who worked hard at their full-time jobs to also help with the housework, and to stay home from their work and nurse the sick – even if they were not the only ones who could do so. Their roles as wage earners were not valued. She recounted several arrangements that girls could use to "settle" their relationships with their families. They could live at home, not pay board, help out with the chores a bit, and buy some of the "extras" that the family would like. They might prefer a more businesslike arrangement, whereby they paid board, as would any stranger. She mentioned one other alternative:

> On the other hand, brutal though it may seem, I have known of many cases where the only solution was for the girl to break away from the family unit and set up her own establishment.
>
> This drastic move is generally made necessary by a family which unanimously makes the working daughter's and sister's first duty the home, and her office job only a stopover afterthought.
>
> I have known many a family to have this attitude no matter what a girl paid, gave, or did in her home. I have known business girls with big jobs on their hands made almost nervous wrecks by families still living in the dark ages as far as their concepts of what a girl's working life really meant, were concerned.[22]

Here is an assertion that a woman's allegiance and duty to the business world might outweigh her commitment, at least in time, to her family. The women discussed were

daughters and sisters, not wives and mothers. Still, the idea that women might have ties to the world of business and money that were as valid (or more so) than those to their families, was a step away from the idea that women's primary responsibilities were to family and home. Also, the idea that a family might not be able to count on unquestioned, selfless, and unremunerated care from all its female members posed a challenge to a once inviolate assumption underpinning United States' society.[23]

Grey asked whether wives could have, not just jobs, but careers. She raised the prospect that two-career couples might have to live apart in order for them to pursue their work. She contended that the assertion, "if two people really loved one another, they could not bear to be apart" was too simplistic. "After all, this 100 percent love of which our mothers speak was at least 90 percent love of job as well as man." Homemaking had been a full-time job that allowed a woman to express her creativity and individuality. But she maintained that now technology had changed that, and a woman longed for other outlets, which might require her to be absent from her husband for a time. But she maintained that physical manifestations of love were not its true measure.[24]

The examples in Cynthia Grey's story were distinctly middle to upper class. She talked about the possible necessity of maintaining two separate establishments for the

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[22] Cynthia Grey, "Home Atmosphere of Paramount Importance to the Business Girl," Lansing State Journal. 10 February 1926, 7.

[23] Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," Journal of American History 75:1 (1988): 9-39; Degler, At Odds, passim; Cowan, "The American Housewife between the Wars," 193; Nancy Folbre and Marjorie Abel, "Women's Work and Women's Households: Gender Bias in the U.S. Census," Social Research 56:3 (Autumn 1989): 545-66; Nancy Folbre, "The Unproductive Housewife: Her Evolution in Nineteenth-Century Economic Thought," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 16:31 (1991): 463-83. The concept of "separate spheres" was a dynamic one that was adapted to the times. However, many construed it as demarcating woman's sphere as the home, the private, and things moral, while man's was business, the public, and things secular.

[24] Cynthia Grey, "More Discussion on the Old Question: May Wife Have a Career?" Lansing State Journal. 18 February 1926, 16.

working couple. This would doubtless have been impossible for many of her readers. She did not mention the complication of children – who was to care for them while the couple pursued their separate careers? The careers to which she referred were those of creative artists who needed to be alone to work. How much relevance would all this have had for a woman living in a cramped flat with a husband and children, struggling to make ends meet by supplementing her spouse's income with her work in a mill, as a waitress, or in a home industry? Grey asserted that one did not need to cook one's husband's dinner or do his laundry to be a good wife. Although this might not have had a significant impact on her mature readers' lives, it might have made them question the sorts of lives to which their daughters could aspire.

The Columnist as Surrogate Parent: High Hopes and Reality

By March 1927, the State Journal had several columnists writing on subjects dealing with and of interest to women. The column "The Woman's Day," by Allene Sumner, began to appear regularly in the women's section. The column often contained several short pieces, written in a conversational tone, with information on current personalities or pithy observations on the lives of women. Her columns continued to appear into 1929.[25]

The study first encountered two other columnists in 1927. Although they differed in gender, background, and column location, S. Parkes Cadman[26] and Dorothy Dix[27] were

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[25] Allene Sumner, "The Woman's Day," Lansing State Journal. March 1927, April 1928, May 1929, passim.

[26]Throughout the period surveyed, S. Parkes Cadman (1864-1936), a radio minister based in England, adhered to this format. His daily column appeared on the editorial page. His international following sent him questions, not only on religious matters, but also on a myriad of social, political, intellectual, and cultural matters. Fred Hamlin, S. Parkes Cadman, Pioneer Radio Minister (New York and London: Harper

united in using an innovation in reader involvement: they printed and answered anonymous readers' letters containing questions that they considered typical. Some of these columns reflect transitions that the United States was undergoing during this time.

March 1927

Several of the columns from 1927 emphasized the importance and virtues of – and the inherent joy that should come from – traditional homemaking. Allene Sumner told the story of Blanche R. Green, a businesswoman who had earned $100,000 in 1926. But Sumner cautioned housewife readers not to envy Green: She was forced into her position by a sick husband and small children, and claimed that she would have been far happier "if fate had permitted her to carry on as wife and mother in an ordinary little home." This testimony "from one who knows both sides of the 'marriage or career' question should cheer our many depressed housewives who envy their business sisters."[28]

These may have been sincere sentiments. They expressed the conventions of the times and may have heartened some readers. However, others might be left with more questions than answers. Perhaps the sick husband and little children were the catalyst behind Green's entering the work force. But that does not explain the drive and ambition

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& Brothers, 1930), passim; S. Parkes Cadman, "Everyday Questions Answered by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman," Lansing State Journal. March 1927, April 1928, May 1929, June 1930, July 1931, passim.

[27] Dorothy Dix, the pen name of Elizabeth Meriwether Gilmer (1861-1951), became a journalist in 1894 when her husband's illness compelled her to support them both. She started writing an advice column in 1895, which became syndicated, and continued until her death in 1951. Dix's columns, which sometimes employed a straight editorial format rather than the question-and-answer style, dealt with aspects of human relations. Cathy N. Davidson and Linda Wagner-Martin, eds., The Oxford Companion to Women's Writing (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), s.v. "Dix, Dorothy," by Carol Reuss; Dorothy Dix, "Dorothy Dix's Letter Box," Lansing State Journal. March 1927, April 1928, May 1929, June 1930, July 1931, passim.

[28] Allene Sumner, "Rich, But - !" Lansing State Journal. 10 March 1927, 14.

that she must have exhibited that enabled her to earn so much money. Would a woman of such abilities truly have been more content to be queen of her own small home?

Dorothy Dix compared the girl of yesterday with Miss 1927 and found that they were the same at heart. She asserted that the main business of girls, then and in the past, was getting married and having babies – it was just the methods employed to achieve these goals that had changed. Dix pronounced the modern girl "more efficient and keen, more straightforward and courageous than grandma. But she lacks her sweetness and unselfishness – Miss 1927 is not wise enough to know that only those women achieve happiness who give it out with both hands." Although she applauded the modern girl's ability to succeed at any job to which she put her hand, she was dismayed at what she perceived to be that generation's egotism and lack of empathy and tenderness. She concluded with observations on the times and what they exacted from inhabitants: "And so they stand, the girl of today and the girl of yesterday, each a product of her times and each meeting the need of her times."[29]

Dix saw benefits and drawbacks to each generation's methods. She did not claim either strategy superior, nor did she suggest trying to hold back change or being blinded by nostalgia. But she did point out that every gain was attended by consequent losses.

In response to a question on March 22, 1927, Dix opined that no woman should try to hold down two jobs – "the work of a woman" (homemaking) and "the work of a man" (work outside the home for pay). She told the questioner that she should continue working only until her husband could support her in a home to which she could devote all

[29] Dorothy Dix, "The Girl of Yesterday vs. Miss 1927," Lansing State Journal. 14 March 1927, 10.

her time.[30] This advice ignores the reality of many contemporary women who either did not have a husband's support, or whose support was not adequate without their supplementing it. Although, as Dix said, the double demands might exact a fearful toll, many women had no choice.[31]

April 1928

By 1928, columnists were emphasizing the importance of education for women as well as men, that marriage was no longer a necessity for women, and that women could be equally as capable at business as men.[32] A fifteen-year-old girl wrote to S. Parkes Cadman, explaining that, while her father had educated his sons, he would not do so for his daughter, because he believed that women never used their education after marriage. The girl asked Cadman for his opinion, declaring that she was determined to gain an education. Cadman replied that such a father was two hundred years behind the times.

> The twentieth century girl is entitled to all the education she can legitimately obtain. The assertion that she never makes use of it after marriage is sheer piffle. Why should any daughter be regarded as a candidate for the matrimonial market? Good life is the goal, not matrimony, and a trained, well informed mind is essential for the attainment of such life.[33]

Cadman gave the father a partial excuse by commenting on the mounting expense of education. However, he concluded by remarking that it was often a man's daughter, who by her education and industry, wound up supporting him in his old age.

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[30] Dorothy Dix, "Mabel," Lansing State Journal. 22 March 1927, 12.

[31] Milkman, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis," 510-528; Degler, At Odds, 395-417; Wandersee, "Working Women During the Great Depression," 45-56.

[32] Allene Sumner, "Woman's Day," Lansing State Journal. 20 April, 1928, 23.

[33] S. Parkes Cadman, "Everyday Questions Answered by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman," Lansing State Journal. 2 April 1928, 4. This was a remarkably progressive position for a man who, only the year before, wrote of the inherent sexual inequality between the genders in S. Parkes Cadman, "Everyday Questions Answered by Dr. S. Parkes Cadman," Lansing State Journal. 22 March 1927, 4.

Dorothy Dix continued the theme that, for "the business girl, like the college girl, ... matrimony is a luxury, not a necessity...." She began a column with a summary of a recent article in Harper's Magazine that had reported on a survey asking why some college women had never married. After listing some of their reasons, she finished the synopsis by stating that although about half regretted not marrying, the remainder were content with their independence and jobs. She continued that the college girl's reasons were precisely why business girls did not marry. She conceded that more college girls than business girls avoided marriage, but contended that this was because going to college made women put off making a marital decision until they were past "the age of indiscretion." Once women had learned some of the lessons of life, whether in college or in "the university of hard knocks," they began "to look at marriage with a wary eye and cold feet." Dix compared, without nostalgia, the options available to the woman of yesterday with those of her day:

> In former times every woman was keen to marry because matrimony was the only respectable gainful occupation open to women. They had to marry to secure a home, a position in society, a means of support, and something interesting with which to fill their lives, but nowadays matrimony is a luxury and not a necessity....

Dix concluded with the observation that the 50 percent satisfaction ratio for single women was about the same as that for married women.[34]

May 1929

In 1929, Dorothy Dix continued to champion a woman's right not to marry and made some revealing observations on the misfortune of being a woman. Dix began the month with a column on how philosophy, common sense, and a good job could ensure that a

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[34] Dorothy Dix, "The Business Girl, Like the College Girl, Has Become 'Choosy' About Men – Nowadays Matrimony Is a Luxury, Not a Necessity – And There Is by No Means the Scramble for Husbands That There Used to Be," Lansing State Journal. 6 April 1928, 16.

woman attained "single blessedness." She pondered why so much had been written on how to be happy when married, and so little on how to be happy when single, and decided that it was because it was much harder when married. She urged unmarried women not to view their singleness as a sign that they were unattractive. "The term 'old maid' is only a gibe in the mouths of fools and dates them as being as prehistoric as the dodo." She claimed that "the girl bachelor and the man bachelor stand upon exactly the same social footing." Dix maintained that every woman would choose to be married if she could have the ideal mate – but asked how realistic that was. There were few perfect men, although each woman tended to imagine that she would be the one who would find one. Dix urged the unmarried woman to "espouse a career." She said that everything had changed from the time the only option available to women was to marry.

> The unmarried woman's life can be just as full of ambitions and useful, constructive work as a man's. She can earn money as a man can. She is as socially and economically free as a man. Far more than any married woman is. And that is not a blessing to be sneezed at.[35]

Dix replied to a seventeen-year-old female correspondent who hated her gender so much that she had tried to kill herself twice, and meant "to make a go of it" the next time. Dix agreed that it was a man's world and that everything in it was harder for a woman. She faulted convention for putting so much emphasis on women's appearance, while placing much less stress on that of men. She concluded by affirming that, although contemporary women had disadvantages, they were much better off than during their grandmother's time. In that time, she claimed, women got no education and did not work outside the home. "But now every door of opportunity is open to you. You can follow

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[35] Dorothy Dix, "The Old Maid of Today Has as Good a Chance for Happiness as the Much-Envied Bachelor – All She Needs Is Philosophy, Common Sense and a Good Job to Attain Single Blessedness," Lansing State Journal. 1 May 1929, 10.

any profession for which you have ability and if you can do as good work you can command as high salary as a man." She urged her correspondent to cheer up and to realize that with all its drawbacks, being a woman did entail "a lot of fun and pleasure" and was necessary for the survival of humanity.[36]

Dix indicated that unmarried women could have lives that were as useful and constructive as married women's. However, she still was not promoting careers for married women. Further, her assertions that women were "as socially and economically free as a man"[37] and could "follow any profession . . . and . . . command as high salary as a man,"[38] were naïve and deceptive. Women were not then and are not now as socially and economically free as are men.[39] Dix was not the only one of her contemporaries who made such claims But such declarations have long-term negative consequences: Declaring victory in a war that is not won, packing up the troops, and going home leaves no one left to fight further necessary battles. Without continued vigilance, even those gains that have been made can erode.[40] Dix erred in comparing the social and economic

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[36] Dorothy Dix, "No One Can Blame a Woman for Wishing She Had Been Born a Man, Agrees Dorothy Dix, Since Everything Is Harder for Her Just Because She Is a Woman – But the Best Thing to Do Is to Be a Good Sport About It," Lansing State Journal. 24 May 1929, 28.

[37] Dix, "Single Blessedness," p. 10.

[38] Dix, "No One Can Blame," p.28.

[39] Although the deception may have been unintentional, the message was nonetheless misleading. Degler, At Odds, 395-417; Evans, Born for Liberty, 182-85, 202; Milkman, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis, 511-28; Stricker, "Cookbooks and Law Books, 1-3, 10-13; Jensen and Scharf, "Introduction," Decades of Discontent, 8; William J. Clinton, Remarks by the President in Statement on Equal Pay (Washington: Office of the Press Secretary, 2000), Available online: http://www.pub.whitehouse.gov/uri-res/I2R?urn:pdi://oma.eop.gov.us/2000/1/24/11.text.1.

[40] Estelle B. Freedman, "The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s," in Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940, Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 28, eds. and with an introduction by Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983), 21-37; Tilley, "Women, Work, and Citizenship," 18; Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," 643-

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[40] Estelle B. Freedman, "The New Woman: Changing Views of Women in the 1920s," in Decades of Discontent: The Women's Movement, 1920-1940, Contributions in Women's Studies, no. 28, eds. and with an introduction by Lois Scharf and Joan M. Jensen (Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 1983), 21-37; Tilley, "Women, Work, and Citizenship," 18; Baker, "The Domestication of Politics," 643-

freedom of working women, not really with working men, but with other women - homemakers. Her assertion that working women were better off socially and economically than homemakers who were totally dependent upon their husbands may have been true in many cases. Yet framing the comparison in those terms placed women in an untenable position. Being better off than one dependent group does not mean that one is truly independent. But if one is being continually reminded how much better off one's gender is than in the past, especially when a leading proponent of this view is an influential member of that same gender, one appears ungrateful and greedy when one questions what actual gains have been made or tries to make further progress.

June 1930

In her June 1930 columns, Dorothy Dix continued to write that opportunities for women existed, but further noted that so did the disadvantages of being a woman. She persisted in voicing disapproval of mothers' working, but acknowledged that it was not only single women who might have to work – marriage was no longer a guaranteed exit from the ranks of outside employment. Dix used an unidentified male narrator to gloat over the advantages of being male:

> Then opportunity knocks far oftener at a man's door than it does at a woman's. There are plenty of things that a man can do from which a woman is debarred just by reason of her sex. And there are other things which she might perhaps do, but from which she is shut off, for the present at any rate, by reason of the prejudice against women.

The speaker continues by noting that appearance does not matter for a man, as it does for a woman, that a man can choose his mate, and that he "can have cake and eat it, too," by having both a career and a home:

46; Degler, At Odds, 328-30; Evans, Born for Liberty, 172-73; 175; 192-96; Jensen and Scharf, "Introduction," Decades of Discontent, 13-14.

> When a woman marries, she has to sacrifice one or the other. She has to be a wife and mother and give up the career, or keep the career and be a failure as a wife and mother, because being a wife and mother is no part-time job. Neither is making a … career. And there is no arguing with nature, that has never devised any new way of having babies, or any synthetic mother that took the place of the real one.[41]

The speaker here might have been Dix, writing in the guise of another gender. By using the sentiments of a man, she was injecting something that she was not saying as Dorothy Dix only a year earlier:[42] Women did not enjoy equal social and economic opportunities with men; they were still subject to many prejudices. Dix and this commentator shared the belief that motherhood was a full-time job, citing nature as irrefutable proof. But what they "proved" was that women bear children, not that they should not work as a consequence. Women who are mothers and who work do not deny their maternity. But they may question a definition of it that says that the only good mother is one who spends all her waking time with her children. The latter interpretation is not borne out by custom, either: The woman of centuries past who worked beside her husband in the fields or in his trade, while trying to maintain a work-intensive home and raise a large number of children, may have had less time to spend with her children than does the woman of today who works outside the home for wages.[43]

Dix wrote a column discussing a report from the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor that marriage "offers 'no economic security for women.'" The report further stated that in the cities, a large proportion of families depended upon the earnings of

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[41] Dorothy Dix, "Why Shouldn't a Man Be Proud Simply Because He's a Man, When All the Advantages and Perquisites of Society, Business and Marriage Fall to His Lot by Right of Birth?" Lansing State Journal. 30 June 1930, 14.

[42] Dix, "No One Can Blame a Woman for Wishing She Had Been Born a Man," 24 May 1929, 28.

[43] Degler, At Odds, 363-67.

women, "and in many homes the entire income is earned by the wife and daughters." Dix pointed out that for some women marriage, far from being an escape from outside work, might actually make their situations worse, since in addition to continuing their wage-earning jobs, they now would have the additional burden of making a home. With a nod to the Depression, Dix conceded that some of the causes for women's outside employment might be beyond their control. But she also criticized the modern woman's taste for extras like radios, autos, movies, silk stockings, lingerie, Paris clothes. She concluded by reiterating her warning that women needed to look at work as a career, not simply a job, since they were apt to have to continue in it for most of their adult lives.[44]

Dix's disseminating this report provided some constructive information to her readers. But her equating the working women that the report describes with the self-absorbed, pleasure-seeking flapper, one of her frequent bogeymen, is unfair and too great a leap. The depredations wrought by the Depression were given a passing mention in half a line. The profligacy of the flapper wife received four paragraphs. She referred to days past as halcyon times when people were satisfied with less. But because there were fewer opportunities does not mean that people were satisfied with them. Dix sets up her argument as a dichotomy, contrasting the necessities of the past with the luxuries of the present. But as times change, so does the definition of "necessity."[45] Who is in a position to say that a mother who works so that her children can go to college, or so that

[44] Dorothy Dix, "No Longer Can Girls Look upon Their Jobs as a Bridge of Sighs That Reaches from the Schoolroom to the Altar, for Government Statistics Prove That Marriage No Longer Provides Economic Security," Lansing State Journal. 2 June 1930, 8.

[45] Wandersee, "Working Women During the Great Depression," 45-56.

they can have a better home or higher quality food and clothes is in any way inferior to Dix's "grandma" who stayed at home and, as she put it, "let George do it?"[46]

Dix returned to the subject of women choosing occupations for which they were "fitted" in another June 1930 column. In past columns, she had made references to the importance of having a good job. Here, she was more specific:

> And always remember in choosing an occupation that women succeed best when they stick to womanly pursuits for which their sex has been training for uncounted generations, and which gives them the benefit of what Mr. Darwin called "inherited acquired characteristics." The chief contribution that women have made to the business office and which makes them invaluable as private secretaries is the housewifely ability to keep things in order and remember all the little details of a business transaction and be able to put their hands on a paper in the dark.[47]

In a time when work was heavily sex segregated, and when a secretary was seen as a surrogate wife (without the complications, generally, of sex), such sentiments were not unusual.[48] But one might have hoped for a broader range of possible occupations offered by a woman who, at the time of this writing, had been both a practicing journalist, as well as columnist, for more than thirty-five years.

July 1931

Two Dorothy Dix columns from 1931 touched upon aspects of a period in which both genders were trying to define their roles. Dix began one column with a detailed description of how homes had never known such discord as in that day: husbands and wives could not get along, and children disrespected their parents. She mused that this

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[46] Dix, "Marriage No Longer Provides Economic Security," p. 8.

[47] Dorothy Dix, "When You Choose a Job, Girls, Choose One for Which You Are Fitted and in Which You Expect to Stay for a Lifetime – Then, Whether You Marry or Not, You Will Always Have a Livelihood," Lansing State Journal. 27 June 1930. 14.

[48] Degler, At Odds, 395-417; Evans, Born for Liberty, 182-85, 202; Milkman, "Women's Work and the Economic Crisis, 511-28; Stricker, "Cookbooks and Law Books, 1-3, 10-13; Jensen and Scharf, "Introduction," Decades of Discontent, 8.

was strange, since it was a time of unparalleled material prosperity (she made no mention of the impact that the current Depression might have); what was causing the disharmony?

> I think it is because we are passing through a transition stage in which husbands and wives and parents and children belong to different worlds.
>
> Husbands and wives quarrel because women are looking at life from the new point of view, while men are still looking at it from the old standpoint. A man marries a girl who has gone from the schoolroom to the business college, and from the business college into a shop or an office where she has held down a good job and earned a good salary, and he is terribly disappointed in her because she doesn't know how to cook and isn't domestic and because she wants to go on with the work in which she is an expert and for which she has fitted herself by years of study and work.

The man expected to treat his wife as his grandfather did his wife – making all decisions for her and "doling out the nickels and dimes on which to run the house."

> And the woman who is just as intelligent and well educated as the man, and perhaps earned as big a salary as he did, won't stand for being treated as her grandmother was, and so they fight it out and wreck their home....

Dix concluded that the solution to this dilemma was for husbands to join the times – "to hurry up and catch up with the procession."[49]

Here, the message was that change could not be reversed or retarded - trying to do so only created further stress. One must adapt or be left behind, bitterly unhappy.

Just two weeks later, Dix used a different approach to discuss the woman's traditional gender role of homemaker. She began by saying that men were forever lamenting that women no longer were domestic minded. She agreed that this was largely true. She also declared that this boded ill for the nation, since the home was its foundation, and there could be no "stable and prosperous home" without a woman in it, working with utter devotion because she thought that it was the highest calling. She derided part-time homemakers who also held down jobs and "whose children roam the streets." She

declared that women's homemaking was the most valuable contribution that they could make to the world. But if they did not choose to do so, it was largely men's fault.

> ...They have never even tried to make housekeeping as a job attractive to women. They haven't even dignified it by ranking it as a trade or a profession, although a man's health and prosperity depend upon how skillful his wife is as a cook and manager and buyer.
>
> Worse still, men do not appreciate the work their wives do in the home....
>
> Another thing that gives housework a black eye with women is that it carries with it no pay envelope....
>
> So if men want women to return to their ancient and honorable occupation of home-making, it is up to them to make it attractive.[50]

Summary and Conclusions

This case study looked at nationally syndicated advice columns that appeared in one Midwestern newspaper, the Lansing State Journal, between 1920 and 1931. It examined how social, political, economic, and legal changes in women's lives, related at least in part to the Nineteenth Amendment, might be reflected in such columns. Since this is the case study of a specific community, inferences drawn from it cannot be scientifically generalized to other areas.

However, aspects of this study show the potential for greater applicability as to what was happening in other contemporary communities and could lay the groundwork for further promising research. Among the most salient points:

1. This community appears to have been representative of others of that time.
2. All of the columns were nationally syndicated – so other communities throughout the country were exposed to the same advice.

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[49] Dorothy Dix, "Is It Because Men Are Old-Fashioned in Their Treatment of Emancipated Wives, and Because Children Are Too Modern for Either Parent, That There Are Fewer Peaceful and Happy Homes?" Lansing State Journal. 13 July 1931, 8.

Women's advice columns opened the door for women to think about opportunities for themselves and their daughters. These columns expressed the country's mood.

When Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment on August 26, 1920, many women readers shared Frederick's excitement, hoping that the ability to vote on issues that directly affected economic and social well-being would give them an opportunity to have a greater voice and to create positive change in society. Grey's columns in the mid-1920s challenged readers to think revolutionary ideas about women and work, daring them to think of themselves as individuals, distinct from parents or husband. They could be successful, glamorous professionals! Yet within the next few years, columnists dampened the thrill. Some, such as Dix, gave contradictory advice in consecutive years: She championed a woman's right to work (at least until she married) and to remain single, but then lamented that it was indeed a man's world. By 1931, readers could feel that with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, things had changed, but not much.

After the Nineteenth Amendment, more women worked, but job possibilities were limited: They had no parity with men. Women were still perceived as sustainers and nurturers; even if they ventured into the world of men, they must adhere to that role. By the end of this study, 1931, the Nineteenth Amendment had not fulfilled its potential. It was just the beginning of changes, changes that are ongoing today.

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[50] Dorothy Dix, "How Can Women Get a Thrill out of Housework When Men Despise It, Yet Take It for Granted and When They Begrudge an Extra Nickel or a Word of Appreciation as Pay for It?" Lansing State Journal. 27 July 1931, 8.

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Images of Women's Basketball Players on the Covers of Collegiate Media Guides

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Abstract

In the advertising and news media, female athletes are consistently trivialized and marginalized through stereotypical images and minimal coverage. These media seem to still ignore the fact that female athletes have professional careers and continue to emphasize the personal areas of their lives. This image of a female athlete may begin at the collegiate level and may be encouraged by stereotypical portrayals of female athletes in publications produced by sports information departments. The purpose of this study was to analyze the covers of a random sample of 1997-1998 women's basketball media guides to determine whether professional or personal images predominate, and some of the factors that may influence these portrayals. Specifically the study examined, the gender of sports information director (SID), the success of the program, and the division (I, II, III) of the program. Results indicate that women sports information personal images in their basketball media guides, and successful programs directors (who are a minority) are slightly more likely to use professional images than are more likely to use professional images.

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In the advertising and news media, female athletes are consistently trivialized and marginalized through stereotypical images and minimal coverage. These media seem to still ignore the fact that female athletes have professional careers and continue to emphasize the personal areas of their lives. This media image of a female athlete may begin at the collegiate level and may be encouraged by stereotypical portrayals of female athletes in publications produced by sports information departments. The purpose of this study is to analyze the covers of a random sample of 1997-1998 women's basketball media guides to determine whether professional or personal images predominate and some of the factors that may influence these portrayals.

Background of the Problem

Media and Women. The media are a powerful channel of communication and the media act as a storyteller. The media narrate a story by introducing the characters in the story, and developing the plot of the story. This method has several weaknesses. First, the narrator tells the story from his/her perspective and second describes the characters in his/her own way. This method allows an audience to view the story only from the narrator's point of view. This method is similar to how our media work. Van Leuven and Slater (1991) suggest two critical roles the media play in the development of an issue. First, the media "provides [sic] running accounts of developing issue dimensions and events prompted by the issue" (p.166). Second, they show how interested publics and organizations form around an issue that has been narrated. However, instead of having one storyteller in the media, we have many storytellers with different perspectives. For

example, in politics we have Democrats and Republicans to voice their different perspectives; in religion, Christians and non-Christians; in sports, the male athlete and the female athletes; the list could go on and on. In every area of our life there are several different groups trying to have their stories told. We can identify different groups who have struggled and are still struggling to have their side of the story told. This may be a result of the media's presentation of issues, of age, ethnic, and gender bias – especially for women.

The media have played a large part in the development of the role of the woman. During the 1800's, women were regarded as inferior and less important than men were. Society believed a woman's place was in the home (Schneir, 1987). Women could not vote, hold public office, receive an education or even participate in sports. In other words, women could not participate in any activities unrelated to the home. As a result, it appears that the only ones doing the storytelling were the men. This phenomenon goes deeper than the male perspective – it digs to the root of society's value system and carries over to sport. Pamela Creedon (1994) attempts to address this issue in her book Women, Media and Sport. In her book, she begins to lay the framework for the development of a sports model by defining several key terms associated with her research. First she defines Sport as a "cultural institution" (p.3), and Sports as "activities or games that are only one component of the institution of Sport" (p.3). In essence, the institution of Sport represents a microcosm of our society. Creedon believes that "sports mirror the rituals and values of the societies in which they are developed" (p.3). One example of this is the parallelism that occurred between the women's movement and the women's sports movement.

Bandy (1981) conducted a study that compared the women's movement to the women's sports movement from 1925 to 1965. During this time she found that there were serious problems that hindered both movements. There seemed to be dissension among the women themselves. Bandy (1981) identified two groups in both movements: the physical educators and female athletes in the women's sport movement and the feminists and reformists in the women's movement. Table 1 summarizes the similarities and differences between the groups within each movement.

In this table, the reformists (from the women's movement) and the physical educators (from the women's sports movement) believed that women were different (economically, physically, morally etc.) As a result, they felt that women should be accommodated for these differences through legislation such as "wage and labor laws for women, special penalties in the law for women, etc." (Bandy, 1981, p.8) On the other hand, the feminists (from the women's movement) and the female athletes (from the women's sports movement) believed that women were equal in every aspect of life and that separate legislation was demeaning to the woman. Although their areas of emphasis were different – the feminists and reformists were at battle for societal issues and the physical educators and female athletes were at battle for sport issues – we can see the parallels of the platforms of each group. The women's sports movement mirrored the women's movement. However, the conflict among the women was a roadblock for both the women's movement and the women's sports movement. How could women expect to be a powerful force in society if they were divided themselves? This "deterred the advance of the women's sports movement and the women's movement in the early

twentieth century, and prevented the mutual support of each movement that eventually developed in the 1970's (p.8).

The women's sport movement became a powerful force in society when Title IX was introduced. During the 1970's Title IX of the education amendments of 1972, one of the most influential pieces of legislation to affect women's athletics was passed. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 stated that " a recipient of federal funds may not discriminate on the basis of race, color, or national origin," (Lohmann, 1995, p.178) thereby providing a legislative pattern for Title IX. Title IX resulted from an effort to add the word "sex" to Title VII's general list of prohibited classifications (Lohmann, 1995). Title IX of the education amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination at all educational institutions receiving federal funds. Because most universities receive federal funds, they fall under the provisions of Title IX. Applying the provision to intercollegiate athletics, Title IX requires that both men and women have equal opportunity in sports and received the benefits of competitive athletics. The implementation of Title IX has been a major factor in the "changing patterns of female sport participation" (Cszima, Wittig, & Schurr, 1988, p.62). The NCAA News (1999) reported that overall women's participation in intercollegiate athletics between 1985-1997 increased 16 percent. Not only has female sport participation increased but so has advertising and news coverage for female athletes.

The advertising medium has taken more interest in the female athlete by "running ads that appeal to women's enthusiasm for sports as a symbol of female liberation and power." (p.11). Not only are there more advertisements, but companies are creating sports magazines for women (Conniff, 1996). According to Bhonslay (1997), corporate

requests to work with women athletes (through endorsements and sponsorships) have increased an estimated 35 percent. She claims that the Olympics coverage showcased women athletes "in a substantive way, not just as sex symbols" (p.62). Not only that, but along with the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA), ESPN, NBC Sports, and Lifetime have partnered to provide news coverage of the female athletes of the league.

Back to the original point about who's telling the story: it appears that women are being recognized more. However, research suggests that the media still reflect the views of the reformists and the physical educators of Bandy's 1981 study, who believe that women are unequal and underrepresented (see next section). This belief may also exist at the collegiate level of the institution of "Sport." Those who are a part of the media in the institutions of "Sport" are predominately men. More specifically, media personnel at the collegiate level may reflect these same beliefs in the media guides that are produced for female sports.

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Review of the Literature

This chapter will summarize the research regarding women's portrayal in advertising and in news in general and in sports – in particular the characteristics and perception associated with women athletes.

Sex Role Portrayals

Advertising. There are two types of roles that exist for women portrayed in advertising. They are the traditional role and the non-traditional role. The traditional role usually portrays the woman as the mother, housewife, and/or clerical worker (Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia, 1977); whereas, the non-traditional role refers to women in high positions of management. Other non-traditional roles include women who participate in sports.

Since the rise of women's suffrage, there has been an increased participation of women in the labor force (Lundstrom & Sciglimpaglia, 1977). For example, in 1970 women were 42 percent of the entire workforce. However, this increase was not reflected in the portrayal of women in advertising.

In the 70's, Courtney and Lockeretz in 1971 identified four major themes in magazine advertisements for women:

1. That a woman's place is in the home
2. That women don't make important decisions
3. That women are dependent on men
4. That men regard women primarily as sex objects

Venkatesan and Losco in 1975 confirmed these themes in a study they conducted; but, the woman, as a housewife was becoming less visible. However, in both magazine advertisements and television advertisements the woman as a sex object and the woman

as a housewife were still the most prevalent. In 1979, Scheibe found that women's roles in television advertisements were broadening as women were being featured in higher occupational roles. So although women represented 42 percent of the workforce, the traditional roles remained predominate in advertising. By the 80's, women labor participation had increased to over 50 percent.

In the 80's, Higgs and Weiller (1987) examined the role portrayal of women in the media by using a consciousness scale developed by Paisley and Butler in1980. The scale consisted of the five levels listed in Table 2. These levels or themes are similar to the themes found in the previous studies. For example, Level 1 "put her down" is equal to the use of women as sex objects; and Level 2 "keep her in her place" is comparative to a woman's place is in the home (cited in Higgs & Weiller, 1987). Table 2 shows a clearer picture of the similarities between the previous studies and Paisley and Butler's scale of media consciousness.

In a content analysis of television ads, Bretl and Cantor (1988) found that although the inequity between women and men was narrowing, there still seemed to be the theme of women in domestic settings. Craig (1992) found that advertisers portrayed different themes according to the target audience. The daytime ads generally carried the theme of "the woman as a homemaker" because the audience was generally the housewife. There still was no significant change in the portrayal of women as compared to the significant increase in female labor participation in the earlier part of the 80's. However, by 1988, women in the workforce had decreased to 43 percent of the entire labor force (Sullivan & O'Connor, 1988).

In the 90's Hall and Crum (1994), found that in television ads, "women are primarily seen as decoration and sex objects" (p.336). These findings supported the results of Courtney and Lockeretz (1971) more than 20 years ago. Three years later, Mackay and Covell (1997) found that women in advertisements were still portrayed as objects for sexual gratification. Not only that but men are also being shown more sexually (Reichert, Lambiase, Morgan, Carstarphen, & Zavoina, 1999). However, women were portrayed sexually three times more than men (Reichert, et.al, 1999). Despite the growth of women in non-traditional roles in our society, the majority of advertisers seem to still portray women as homemakers and sex objects overall.

In order to offset these general themes on women's portrayal there have been new modern images created to better address the working women of the 90's. Jaffe and Berger (1995) introduced the "superwoman" theme and the"egalitarian" theme. The "superwoman" theme is similar to Level 3 "give her two places" of Paisley and Butlers' scale of media consciousness, and the "egalitarian" theme is similar to Level 5 " she and he are non-stereotypical" of Paisley and Butlers' scale of media consciousness (cited in Higgs and Weiller, 1987).

The "superwoman" image often shows women managing both job and home successfully with little help. On the other hand, the "egalitarian" image shows both women and men doing household chores along with their occupational jobs.

From 1970 to 1988, we can see a significant increase in women's participation in the labor force. However, the advertising medium's view of women's roles has changed slightly; still emphasizing the homemaker and sex object roles as the dominant roles for women. One reason may be the lack of media coverage dedicated to women.

Media Coverage

News Coverage of Women in General

"The treatment of women by the news media has been the subject of systematic research since the early 1970's" (Silver, 1984,p.4). However, feminists and researchers believe that news coverage contributes to inequity by either totally ignoring or trivializing women (Silver, 1984). A study of Time and Newsweek, conducted by Matthew and Reuss (1985), found that from the 1940's to the 1980's women were pictured in stereotypical roles. For example, females represented from 77 to 83.9 percent of all photographs as spouses. Between 1.7 and 5.3 percent of the females were pictured as athletes. This was still stereotypical because the sport which the females represented are considered to be feminine (e.g. ice skating, swimming, tennis), thus supporting the female as a sex object because of societies' perception. I will discuss these perceptions later in this paper.

In 1989, Betty Friedan and Nancy Woodhull helped establish Women, Men and the Media. Its purpose is to " examine diversity in news coverage." In their examination of 10 national newspapers, they measured news coverage by the number of women used as references/sources, the number of female bylines on the front-page, and the number of photos on the front page. In 1989, women represented 52 percent of the entire population and 49 percent of newspaper readers. However, women were only used as references 11 percent of the time. In 1994, the number of references peaked at 25 percent, but has steadily declined since. Figure 1 is a summary of this data from 1989-1996. In 1989, women were featured in front-page bylines 27 percent of the time. This number rose to 35 percent in 1996, the highest percentage of all the studies. Figure 2 is a summary of this data from 1989-1996.

Women's photographs on the front page represented 24 percent of all photographs in 1989. In 1994, 39 percent of all photographs were of females. This was the highest in all the studies. In 1995 there was a six percent decrease in the amount of female photographs and in 1996 the number remained at 33 percent. Figure 3 shows this decline.

In a 1984 study of male and female officials in Michigan, Silver measured the amount of news coverage by counting the number of mentions a female official received as compared to the male; the length of the story for a female official as compared to a male official; how the female was described (e.g., attire, physical attributes, marital status, parental status); and the context of the mention (e.g. non-job/feature story, or job-related story). Unlike previous studies, she used occupation and seniority as a control for the study. She found occupation to be a determinant of news coverage (Silver, 1984). The higher the occupation or importance of the occupation, the more coverage a person will receive. However, even with occupation controlled, inequalities in the coverage of men and women still occurred (Silver, 1984).

In the news medium there seems to be little coverage of women compared to the numbers in the population. Some of this may be due to the non-acceptance of non-traditional roles for women in our society. This is especially true for women who participate in sports.

News Coverage of Women Athletes. The occupation of athlete is one that receives as much media coverage as the occupation of politics. However, during the 1970's and early 1980's, coverage for women's sporting events was considerably less than for men in newspapers (Higgs & Weiller, 1987). During the NCAA Basketball

Championship in March 1986, the University of Texas women's basketball team won. Their story was placed on page nine (of a Texas paper) and was only three columns in length. On the other hand, the men's championship (in which no Texas team was represented) was on the front page of the same paper (Higgs & Weiller, 1987). In a 1973 study conducted by New World Decisions Ltd., one of 366 total hours of television media coverage was dedicated to women sports. This was compared to a study done in the 80's that found only three of 380 total television hours dedicated to women's sports (Weiller & Higgs, 1992). Silverstein's (1995) study of newspaper coverage of women's sports discovered that the men received three times as many "stories, photos, and graphics" (p.1) as the women. However, a total of 27.5 total hours of television media coverage was dedicated to women in 1990 (Weiller & Higgs, 1992). Tuggle (1996) attributes unequal coverage of women athletes to the fact that they are not as "high-profile" as male-athletes. Even in newsmagazines like Sports Illustrated, Sport, World Tennis, Time, Newsweek, and People (p.5), coverage was lower for women. In a comparison of the amount of coverage by CNN and ESPN, Tuggle (1996) reported that combined, 94.6 percent of the stories were about male sports and 4.9 percent of the stories were about female sports. However, more airtime was devoted to individual sports for women than team sports. Some reason for this phenomenon may be the perceived femininity of individual sports for women, which seems to parallel the non-professional perception of females in general. To fully understand the concept of femininity and masculinity, I must discuss the concept as it relates to sport participation. I now turn to the literature on the perceived femininity/masculinity of sport participation.

Perceived Femininity/Masculinity of Sport Participation

How is femininity defined. The word femininity is derived from the root word "feminine," which is defined as "or belonging to the female sex: marked by qualities attributed to women" (American, 1983, p.259). Harris (1994) tested the items listed in Tables 3 and 4 for the validity of their ability to adequately define masculinity and femininity. According to Harris (1994), femininity can be defined by 19 qualities. These qualities are listed in Table 3.

All of these qualities can be applied to a mother, housewife, maybe even a secretary, but not necessarily to a professional woman, such as the female athlete. Table 4 lists the qualities that are defined as masculine.

According to Myers and Lips (1978), females who participate in competitive amateur sports may show both feminine and masculine characteristics (p.578). According to Ames (1984), the attributes that have lead to athletic success have been generally considered to be masculine: "determination, aggression, leadership, competitiveness, and self-confidence" (p.3). These characteristics contradict the concept of feminized sports participation and contribute to the non-professional perceptions of women athletes.

A study by Hoferek and Hanick (1985) found that sports participation was neither an enhancement nor detraction of the female gender. Pedersen and Kono's (1990) findings reinforced the views of Hoferek and Hanick (1985) and Snyder and Spreitzer (1973) that there has been little change in the society's view of women participating in sports. Despite this neutral viewpoint, Birrell 1983, (cited in Cszima, Wittig, & Schurr,

1988) said that: "sports remain highly associated with the so-called 'masculine' elements of our culture, and the female in sport is still considered a woman in a man's territory" (p.62).

Femininity of Sport Participation. The distinction of masculinity/femininity not only applies to the athlete but also to the sport itself. There have been several studies that have investigated the masculinity and femininity of sports.

As stated earlier, any word that contains "feminine" as the root word is referring to characteristics of or belonging to a woman. Metheney in 1965 (cited in Cszima, et.al. 1988) classified sports into three categories: "not appropriate," "may be appropriate," and "wholly appropriate" for a woman (Cszima, et.al, 1988, p.64). According to Metheny (1965), a sport was wholly appropriate for a woman, " if the sports involved projecting the body in aesthetically pleasing patterns, using manufactured devices to facilitate bodily movement, applying force through a light implement, overcoming resistance of a light object, and competing where a physical barrier is present" (Cszima, et. al., 1988, p.64). Some examples would be figure skating, skiing, golf, tennis, bowling, volleyball, and swimming and diving (Cszima, et. al. 1988). Hoferek and Hanick (1985) replicated a study done by Snyder, Kilvin, and Spreitzer (1975) which rated six sports on a scale of perceived femininity. On the least feminine end of the continuum were basketball, track, and softball. The same rankings were found in a study conducted by Pedersen and Kono (1990). Boutilier and San Giovanni in 1982 (cited in Tuggle 1996) found that women athletes in the media were shown in "passive non-athletic poses that capture their personality, style, and charm" (p.6).

Tuggle (1996) states:

> "female athletic participation continues to be underrepresented and trivialized in the media, and the trivialization comes partly from the media's propensity to emphasize 'feminized' women playing socially acceptable individual sports over those engaged in athletic competition against a team of opponents. Only those females who participate in individualized, non-contact sports are afforded more than passing media coverage. This effectively removes women's team sports from the media's agenda and reinforces the idea that women who play team sports are somehow different" (p.27).

Studies have identified the woman as a homemaker and the woman as a sex object to be the most consistent roles for women in advertising, of which the ultimate goal is profit for the producers of the ads. Unlike the advertising medium, the news medium's ultimate goal is satisfaction for their audience. In the news medium women are minimized through stereotypical portrayals of women or trivialized through ignoring their existence in non-traditional roles, like the role of the female athlete, especially the female athlete in team sports. This leads me to my statement of the problem.

Statement of the Problem

In the institution of "Sport", female athletes have been consistently trivialized and marginalized through the stereotypical images of women in society and the type of media coverage they have received (Creedon, 1994). Where there is coverage, these stereotypes continue to emphasize the personal areas of women athletes' lives and ignore the fact that women athletes have professional careers. These stereotypes show (especially those who participate in team sports) that the professional female athlete is not accepted and not taken seriously. For example, in 1994, Alexander (cited in Tuggle, 1996), concluded that the woman as a sex object is reinforced when the media ignore women's team sports because female athletes should participate in sports that are "glamorous and graceful, and do not make them sweat."

Those sports identified as feminine such as ice-skating and gymnastics may be glamorous and graceful, but participation and opportunities are limited. These sports

require a lot of personal training, which may not be affordable for the average American family. However, those sports identified as masculine for females, like basketball and softball, are common, easily accessible, and affordable. These sports also offer more opportunities for receiving a free college education for women than the individual sports. A total of 90 universities offer scholarships in gymnastics compared to 1002 universities, which offer scholarships in basketball (www.NCAA.org, February 26,1999).

The collegiate level is probably the most important level of athletic competition. Some reasons for this may be the fact that federal institutions (e.g. colleges) require gender equity in the athletic realm; due to Title IX legislation. Although both male and female athletes now have equal opportunity, inequality in media coverage and underrepresentation still exist. If underrepresentation of female athletes is occurring at the collegiate level (where federal laws require equity), then how can we expect to receive equal coverage and representation for our professional achievements in other areas of the media? This phenomenon raises the question of whether those who work as sports information directors in the institution of "Sport" are contributing to the stereotypical portrayals of female athletes. The sports information director (SID) is responsible for promoting the sports sponsored by their university through press releases, special events, and media guides. Sports information directors play a significant gatekeeping function in the coverage and portrayal of female athletes (Creedon, Cramer, & Granitz, 1994). Despite the growth of female athletic participation, women's sports information directors have decreased from 29 percent in 1980 to 17 percent in 1990. However, male sports information directors have increased from 71 percent in 1980 to 83 percent in 1990. (Creedon, et.al, 1994). Creedon, et.al., (1994) discovered that out of all the sports offered

at universities, basketball ranked as the most highly promoted sport by 80 percent of the sports information directors.

These directors are responsible for media guides; publications which serve as the information source of the media inside the institution of "Sport"(e.g. school newspaper, other colleges, etc.) and the media outside the institution of "Sport" (e.g. local, regional, national, and international newspapers, radio stations, and television stations) who participate in the institution of "Sport." These publications may influence the portrayals of female athletes. The way female athletes are perceived by the institution of "Sport" may be an influence on the media because the cover sets the tone of the media guide or rather presents the image that the institution of "Sport" may want to use to sell the university or program. There may be factors that influence the way that female athletes are presented on these covers such as the gender of who's presenting the information, and how successful has the program been.

For this reason, I am going to look at the relationship between the gender of the sports information director versus portrayal, and the success of the program versus portrayal. This leads me to my hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: Female sports information directors are more likely to present professional images of women athletes than the male sports information directors.

- Rationale 1: The literature shows that women are usually portrayed as non-professional in the media. Since men dominate the sports information field, their portrayal of female athletes is expected to parallel the portrayal of women in general. Since basketball is a sport that is perceived to be a masculine sport, efforts by the male sports information director may be to minimize this perception through non-professional/personal portrayals of female athletes.

- Hypothesis 2: Successful programs will be more likely to present non-professional/personal images of women athletes than unsuccessful programs.

- Rationale 2: Both the advertising and news media seem to concentrate on the image of the product or organization, not the actual people in the ads or the organization. The media seem to show non-professional women; as result, sports information directors may feel that this is the image that will sell the program. Secondly, it seems that no matter how successful female athletes have become, the media usually finds a way to focus on the non-professional/personal areas of their lives.

Methodology

This chapter describes the research design for this study and key words associated with this research. The key words are presented and defined as they relate to the study in three sections – sampling , categories and definitions, and reliability.

Sampling

A random sample of 225 universities was selected from the NCAA's home page list of all the universities who have a women's basketball program. Seventy- five universities were selected from each of the three Divisions (I, III, & III). There were two International universities selected in the original sample. They were dropped from the sample and replaced with the next two American universities that appeared on the list. Once selected, the fax numbers and e-mail addresses for the sample were marked in the CoSida sports information directory. An e-mail or fax was sent to the sports information director requesting a copy of the university's 1997-1998 media guide. If the sports information director did not respond, he/she was e-mailed or faxed again. If there was no response by e-mail, then the sports information director was faxed; if there was no response by fax, then the sports information director was called. Ten universities could not be contacted from the fax numbers or e-mail addresses listed in the CoSida sports information directory because of some type of error, and six universities were not listed in CoSida. Seven of the universities did not have media guides due to budget constraints and one university did not send a media guide because it would violate their universities' policy on the dissemination of media guides. Three universities had run out of women's basketball media guides due to NCAA appearances. These 27 universities were dropped from the sample, and the next 27 schools in the sample were selected. I received 68% (152) of the requested media guides.

Categories and Definitions

Coding of Covers. Each media guide was coded for four things: division (I, II, III; this is in reference to their NCAA affiliation and was used as a control), success of program/record (at and above 50%, and below 50%), gender of sports information director (male/female), cover (all-action, action-predominate, non-action, non-action predominate, neither).

Gender, success and division could be found inside the front cover on the first or second page of the media guide in a section called "Quick Facts."

Gender, was determined by the name whether (a male name or a female name) and looking at the picture of the sports information director that was provided in another section usually called "Media Staff" or "Supporting Staff."

Success of the program was determined by the previous year's record. A successful program was one where the record of games won was 50 percent or more. For example, a program with a record of 14 (wins) and 14 (losses) or 20 (wins) and 8 (losses) would be considered successful programs. An unsuccessful program was one where the record of games won was less than 50 percent. For example, a program with a record of 8 (wins) and 20 losses) would be considered an unsuccessful program.

The media guides were coded for the manner in which the female athletes were being portrayed on the cover – whether "professional," "non-professional/personal," or "neither." Five coding indicators were developed after a pre-test of 20 covers of media guides. They were: all-action, non-action, action-predominate, non-action predominate, or neither. The all-action and action-predominate groups were indicators of professional images. The non-action and non-action predominate groups were indicators of non-

professional/personal images. The "neither" group was an indicator that the program does not feature the female athlete. Therefore, a media guide was categorized as "professional," if the female athlete(s) was/were portrayed actively (see all-action, action predominate section for definition). A media guide was categorized as "non-professional," if the female athlete(s) was/were portrayed passively (see non-action, non-action predominate section for definition). If no female athlete(s) was/were shown on the cover, or other images were shown, the guide was coded as "neither."

All-action. A media guide was placed in this group if all the female athletes on the cover were actively competing or participating in athletic activity (e.g. dribbling, passing, shooting, defending, rebounding, etc.). This category is an indicator of "professional," because these images emphasize the female athlete's athletic abilities.

Non-action. A media guide was placed in this group if the female athletes were shown not competing in athletic activity (e.g. standing, sitting, hugging, talking, etc.). This category is an indicator of "non-professional/personal," because these images stereotype female athletes.

Action-predominate and Non-action predominate. A cover was placed in either of these groups if a female athlete was pictured in both roles. There are three scenarios in which this occurred.

Scenario #1: If 50 percent or more of the female athletes shown on the cover were actively participating rather than passively participating, and vice versa the cover was placed into the appropriate group:

> Formula 1: action predominate = active female athlete > (50%) passive female athlete -- an indicator of "professional."
>
> Formula 2: non-action predominate = passive female athlete > (50%) active female athlete -- an indicator of "non-professional/personal."

Scenario #2: If the shadow of the passive athlete was shown under a regular picture of an actively participating female athlete, then the cover was placed in the action predominate group and vice versa.

Scenario #3: For those covers in which the predominate category (whether active or passive female athlete) could not be distinguished, the lengths and widths of each type (active photos and passive photos) were measured. If the action photos computed to more than 50 percent of the cover, then the cover was coded for action predominate. The same procedure was used for the non-action predominate group.

Neither. Covers with no athletes on front, or with pictures of the coach, basketballs, buildings, trophies, or designs were placed into the "neither" group. Those media guides that were mixed with men's guides were placed into this group because the cover usually featured a male athlete on front or both a male and female athlete. This category is an indicator that the sports information director is ignoring or trivializing the female athlete.

Reliability

Each media guide was coded three times by the same coder, with at least a week or two in between. Any differences were resolved. The media guides were also separated into five groups by category to check for consistency of coding within each group. Any differences were resolved.

Results

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study. First, a general analysis of the findings overall are reported. Second, tests of hypothesis one (gender breakdown) and hypothesis two (success breakdown) are reported. Lastly, divisional breakdown is reported.

Analysis of Results

The analysis yielded 152 covers (62 for division I, 45 for division II, and 45 for division III). The sports information directors were 86 percent male (see table 5). As is immediately apparent, there were far fewer female sports information directors than males.

These numbers parallel similar numbers in Creedon – referred to earlier on page 17. Compared with figures in a 1980 and 1990 survey, female sports information directors are steadily decreasing and male sports information directors are increasing (see Figure 4).

As Table 6 reports, the non-action (NA) and all-action (AA) coding indicators were fairly equal and ranked highest at 37 percent and 35 percent respectively. The non-action predominate coding indicator was the lowest at three percent.

The five coding indicators were combined and produced three categories: professional and non-professional categories are both 40 percent of the media guide covers. The programs are equally divided. Nearly a third of programs either did not feature the women on their covers or combined them with men.

Of the programs that indicated their win/loss record, successful programs made up 55 percent of the sample, (see Table 8). Four programs did not show their show their previous record and one program was in its first year of women's basketball.

Hypothesis One: Gender Breakdown

Hypothesis one stated that female sports information directors would be more likely to use professional images of the female athlete, whereas male sports information directors would be more likely to use non-professional/personal images. Table 9 reports the percentages of male and female sports information director in relation to their categorical ranking.

Although the number of female sports information directors is small, they still present female athletes professionally (48%) slightly more than male sports information directors (42%), although they (the female sports information directors) are also more likely to use covers that do not feature female athletes. As stated earlier, the non-professional/personal category is an indicator of stereotyped images and the neither category is an indicator of ignoring or trivializing female athletes. However, when these two categories are added together the results show a different perspective. Table 10 reveals these data more clearly.

Further examination shows that although both the male and female sports information directors stereotype or ignore the female athlete, the male sports information director is still more likely to stereotype of ignore the female athlete (59%) as compared to the female sports information director's portrayal (52%).

Raw percentages support hypothesis one, although the differences are very small. Group sizes were so unequal that I did not test statistically.

Hypothesis Two: Success Breakdown

Hypothesis two stated that a successful program would portray non-professional/personal images of the female athletes and unsuccessful programs would portray professional images of the female athlete. Table 11 reports the percentages of the success of the program in relation to their portrayal of the female athlete.

According to Table 11, of the programs, which indicated their win/loss record, 43 percent of successful programs portrayed the athletes as professional and 44 percent of unsuccessful programs portrayed the athlete as professional. Table 12 shows that when the non-professional/personal and "neither" categories are added together, there still is little difference.

Programs overall, regardless of success, are unlikely to present a professional image of the female athletes on their covers. In 56 percent of unsuccessful programs and 57 percent of successful programs, images of the female athletes on media guide covers are either stereotyped or ignored. Success of the program appears to have no relationship tot he type of portrayal the sports information director will use.

Hypothesis two is not supported.

Division Breakdown

No hypothesis was formulated as to what relationship division would have on the female athlete portrayal; however, the numbers are worth reporting.

In each division, the gender breakdown paralleled the overall findings (see Table 13)

Males dominated the sports information field ranging from 84 percent to 87 percent, which was more than half. Non-professional images were over half of the entire sample (see Table 14), with the largest percentage being represented in Division II (69%).

Division I. Sixty-two schools were in Division I. In division I, males represented 85 percent of all sports information directors. Both the male sports information director (55%) and the female sports information director (56%) were slightly more likely to present non-professional/personal images of female athletes (see Table 15).

Of the successful program, 52 percent of them presented non-professional/personal images, which was slightly less than unsuccessful programs (59%) (see Table 15).

Division II. Forty-five were in Division II. In division II males represented 87 percent of all sports information directors. This was the highest percentage of all the divisions. The male sports information director (69%) was slightly more likely to present non-professional/personal images than the female sports information director (60%). Overall non-professional images (69%) dominated this category for both the male and female sports information director (see Table 16).

Of the successful programs, 79% of them used non-professional/personal images on their covers, which was also the highest of the three categories.

Division III. Forty-five schools were in Division III. 84 percent of the sports information directors were male. Female sports information directors ranked highest of all divisions at 16 percent. 63 percent of the male sports information directors presented non-professional images of female athletes. On the other hand, 57 percent of the female

sports information directors presented professional images of the female athlete as opposed to 36 percent of male sports information directors (see Table 17).

Of the successful programs, the percentages were equally divided of non-professional presentation. However, the unsuccessful program ranked highest at 71 percent of non-professional images.

In each division, males represent the majority of all sports information directors. Also, non-professional images of female athletes appear to dominate the covers of collegiate media guides. The overall percentages indicate that the male sports information directors is slightly more likely to use non-professional images than the female sports information director; and that success appears not to have any relationship as to whether professional or non-professional images will be used on the covers. Overall, the percentages in all categories were parallel to the final results.

Discussions/Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study, and the implications these findings have on the presentation of female athletes in the media. Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are discussed.

Discussion

This study examined the images of female athletes on the covers of collegiate media guides. The findings supported previous research, that the female athlete is still being stereotyped, ignored, or trivialized in public images. The study also revealed that 60 percent of all images of female athletes show them as non-professional. The other 40 percent portray professional images of the female athlete. Male sports information directors are slightly more likely to stereotype or ignore female athletes (59%) than female sports information directors (52%). Overall, the findings show that males (86%) still dominate the sports information field.

There was little difference between the type of portrayal in both successful and unsuccessful programs. Both were more likely to show non-professional images; unsuccessful programs showed 56 percent.

These results are disturbing – especially for the sport of basketball. Since Title IX women's participation in intercollegiate athletics has increased; however, female sports information directors are steadily decreasing, while male sports information directors are increasing. Since males dominate the sports information department, it is fair to say that their portrayal of female athletes parallel those of the general media. Reasons for this are unclear, however, as I stated earlier, the sports information directors may be trying to sell

the program by presenting the images that they think the media want. Secondly, the non-professional/personal images, which have dominated other areas of the media, appear to be present in the sports information departments at the collegiate level. Thirdly, if these non-professional/personal images, which have dominated other areas of the media, and the "institution of Sport" is a mirror of our society (Creedon, 1994), then the problem begins with society. This implies that societal values of women in general will have to change, before society can accept the female athlete for who she is and respect her for what she does (see Figure 5). In Figure 5 we see that the institution of Sport is being influenced by society's values.

Since federal law requires gender equity in the collegiate realm – in regard to sport participation, budgets, and other benefits; I would like suggest that the first step has already been taken to remove the stereotypical sunglasses that both male and female sports information directors have worn. If this is the case, then changes from within the "institution of Sport" can maybe influence a change in attitudes in society (see Figure 6).

Limitations

This study was limited to only one sport, because of the allotted time given for this research. Therefore, comparisons across different sports could not be made. Statistical tests could not be done because of the small number of female sports information directors.

Future Recommendations for Research

A comparison of the images of the female athletes on media guides of several different sports (both team and individual sports) would be of interest. Also gender comparisons of athletes in the same sports would be of interest. Questions to be asked

would include: How are male athletes in team sports presented on collegiate media guides as opposed to the female athletes in team sports? Does the type of sport influence gender portrayal of the male athlete?

Conclusions

The rate at which women's participation in sports has grown far outweighs the amount and type of coverage received from the media both inside and outside the "institution of Sport." As stated earlier, " sports mirror the rituals and values of the societies in which they are developed" (Creedon, 1994, p.3). This statement has been supported in this study. It appears that the "institution of Sport" still reflects society's socially-constructed view of gender roles. The first step in equity coverage must begin at the collegiate level. If portrayals female athletes can be modified at the collegiate level of institution of "Sport," then society can reflect a new perspective of gender roles and eventually recognize female athletes for their athletic ability.

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Table 1

Women's Movement Platform vs. Women's Sports Movement Platform

Reformists/Physical Educators	Feminists/Female Athletes
Women are fundamentally different from men:	Women are not significantly different from men:
Economic/physical	Economic/physical
Social/psychological	Social/psychological
Physical/moral	Physical/moral
Legislation and sports programs reflect inequality of sexes.	Legislation and sports programs reflect equality of sexes.

Note. The data are taken from Bandy (1981)

Table 2

Previous Studies vs. Paisley and Butler's Scale of Media Consciousness

Previous Studies	Paisley and Butler
Woman as sex object	Level 1 – Put her down
Woman as a homemaker	Level 2 – Keep her in her place
Superwoman	Level 3 – Give her two places
----------	Level 4 – She is equal
Egalitarian	Level 5 – She ad he are non-stereotypical

Note. Data taken from Higgs & Weiller (1987)

Table 3

Feminine Qualities indicated by the Bem Sex Role Inventory(BSRI)

Affectionate	Loves children
Cheerful	Loyal
Childlike	Sensitive to the needs of others
Compassionate	Shy
Does not use harsh language	Soft spoken
Eager to soothe hurt feelings	Sympathetic
Flatterable	Tender
Gentle	Understanding
Gullible	Warm
	Yielding

Note. Data taken from Kolbe & Langefeld (1993).

Table 4

Masculine Items indicated by the Bem Sex Role Inventory(BSRI)

Acts as a leader	Has leadership abilities
Aggressive	Independent
Ambitious	Individualistic
Analytical	Makes decisions easily
Assertive	Self-reliant
Athletic	Self-sufficient
Competitive	Strong personality
Defends own beliefs	Willing to take risks
Dominant	Willing to take a stand
Forceful	

Note. Data taken from Kolbe &Langefeld (1993)

Table 5

Percentage of Male and Female Sports Information Directors

	N	All divisions
Male	130	86%
Female	21	14%

Note. n=151: One of the media guides did not list the SID.

Table 6

Percentages of Images of Female Athletes

	N	All divisions
Non-Action (NA)	56	37%
All-Action (AA)	53	35%
Neither (N)	32	21%
Action Predominate (AP)	7	5%
Non-Action Predominate (NAP)	4	3%

Note. n=152

Table 7

Percentages for Professional, Non-Professional, and Neither Images of the Female Athlete

	Professional = AA + AP (n=60)		
	AA	35%	
	AP	5%	
Professional Image			40%
	Non-Professional = NA + NAP (n=60)		
	NA	37%	
	NAP	3%	
Non-Professional Image			40%
	Neither = N (n=32)		
Neither		21%	21%

Table 8

Percentages of Successful and Unsuccessful Programs

	N	All division
Successful programs	81	55%
Unsuccessful programs	66	45%

Note. n=147

Table 9

Percentage of Sports Information Directors by Images of the Female Athlete

	Male SID (n^1)	Female SID (n^2)
Professional	42% (55)	48% (10)
Non-Professional/personal	37% (48)	29% (6)
Neither	21% (27)	24% (5)

Note. ^{1}n=130; ^{2}n=21

Table 10

Two-Category Summary of Gender by Images of the Female Athlete

	Male SID (n^1)	Female SID (n^2)
Professional	42% (55)	48% (10)
Non-Professional/personal + Neither	59% (75)	52% (11)

Note. ^{1}n=130; ^{2}n=21

Table 11

Percentage of Program Success by Images of the Female Athlete

	Successful (n^1)	Unsuccessful (n^2)
Professional	43% (35)	44% (29)
Non-Professional/personal	38% (31)	36% (24)
Neither	19% (15)	20% (13)

Note. ^{1}n=81; ^{2}n=66

Table 12

Two-Category Summary of Program Success by Images of the Female Athlete

	Successful (n^1)	Unsuccessful (n^2)
Professional	42% (55)	48% (10)
Non-Professional/personal + Neither	57% (46)	56% (37)

Note. ^{1}n=81; ^{2}n=66

Table 13

Division Breakdown of Gender of Sports Information Director

	Division I	Division II	Division III	Total
Male	85% (53)	87% (39)	84% (38)	86% (130)
Female	15% (9)	11% (15)	16% (7)	14% (21)
Total	100% (62)	98% (44)	100% (45)	100% (151)*

Note. One of the Media Guides did not list the SID

Table 14

Division Breakdown of Images of the Female Athlete

	Division I	Division II	Division III	Total
Professional	45% (28)	31% (14)	40% (18)	40% (60)
Non-Professional	54% (34)	69% (31)	60% (27)	60% (92)
Total	99% (62)	100% (45)	100% (45)	100% (152)

Table 15

Breakdown of Gender and Success by Images of the Female Athlete for Division I

Division I	Professional	Non-Professional & Neither	Total
Gender			
Male	45% (24)	55% (29)	85% (53)
Female	44% (4)	56% (5)	15% (9)
Success			
Successful	48% (16)	52% (17)	53% (33)
Unsuccessful	41% (12)	59% (17)	47% (29)

Table 16

Breakdown of Gender and Success by Images of the Female Athlete for Division II

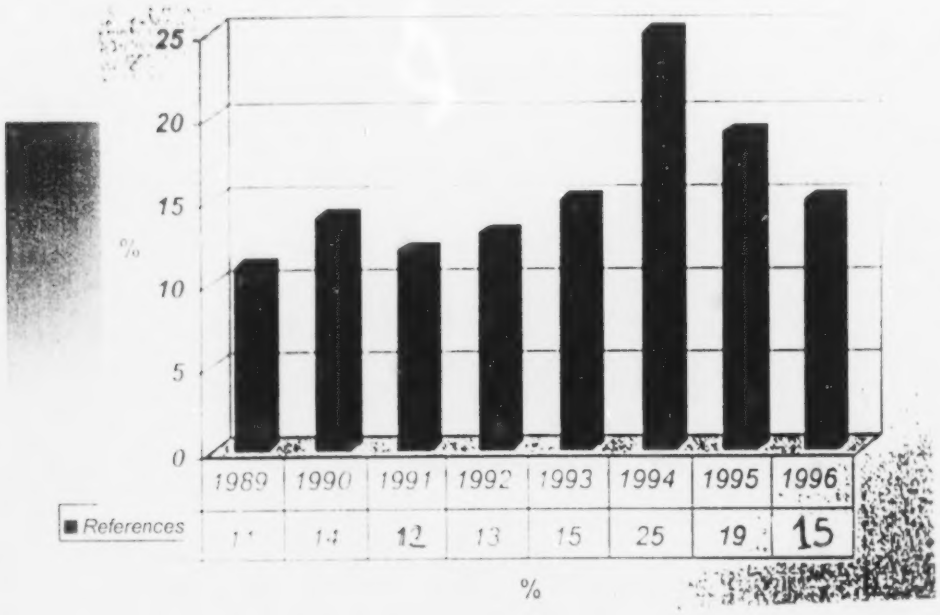
Division II	Professional	Non-Professional & Neither	Total
Gender			
Male	31% (12)	69% (27)	87% (39)
Female	40% (2)	60% (3)	11% (5)
Success			
Successful	25% (6)	79% (19)	53% (24)
Unsuccessful	44% (8)	55% (10)	40% (18)

Table 17

Breakdown of Gender and Success by Images of the Female Athlete for Division III

Division III	Professional	Non-Professional & Neither	Total
Gender			
Male	37% (14)	63% (24)	84% (38)
Female	57% (4)	43% (3)	16% (7)
Success			
Successful	50% (13)	50% (13)	58% (26)
Unsuccessful	29% (5)	71% (12)	38% (17)

Figure 1. Women as References in Daily Newspapers



Note. Data from Women, Men, and Media Brochure 1989-1996; Data in 1989 included only 10 national newspapers; Data from 1990-1996 added 10 local newspapers to the study

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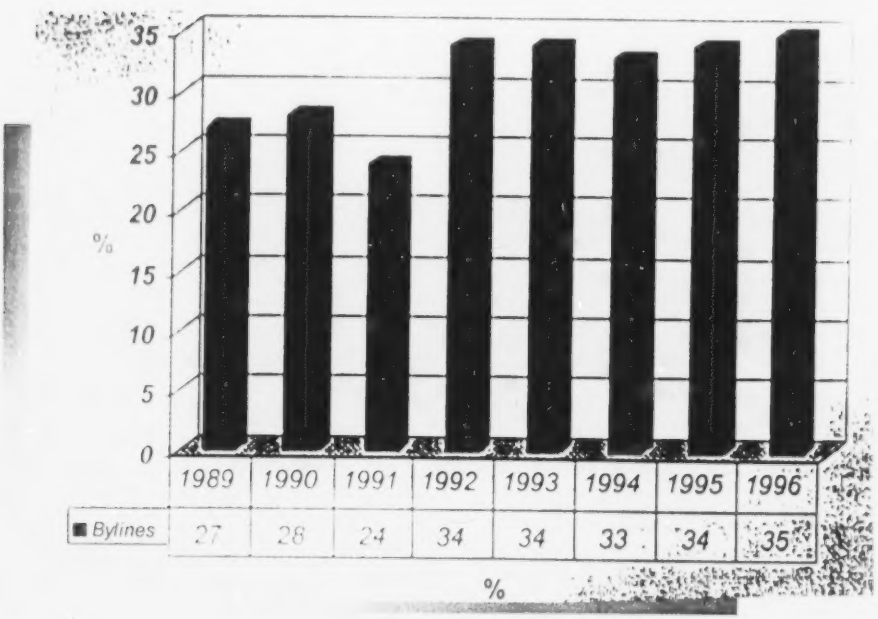
Figure 2. Women in Bylines in Daily Newspapers



Note. Data from Women, Men, and Media Brochure 1989-1996; Data in 1989 included only 10 national newspapers; Data from 1990-1996 added 10 local newspapers to the study

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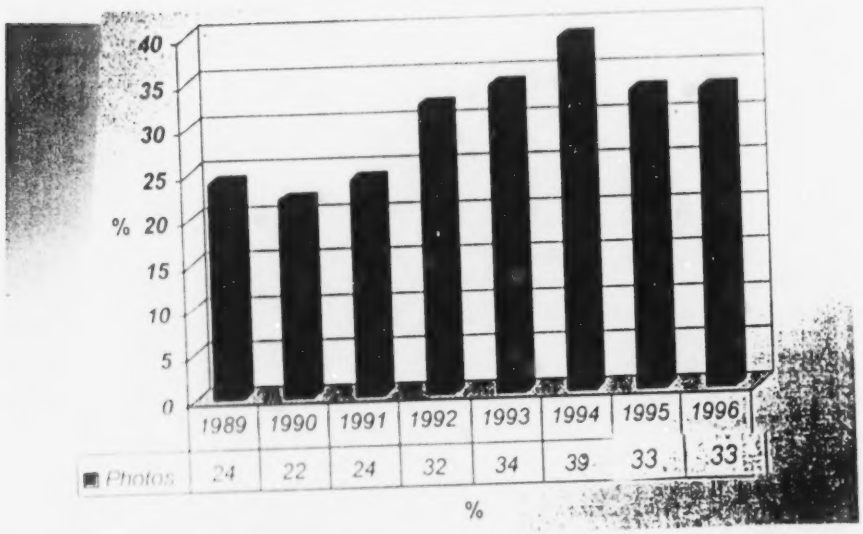
Figure 3. Women in Photos in Daily Newspapers



Note. Data from Women, Men, and Media Brochure 1989-1996; Data in 1989 included only 10 national newspapers; Data from 1990-1996 added 10 local newspapers to the study

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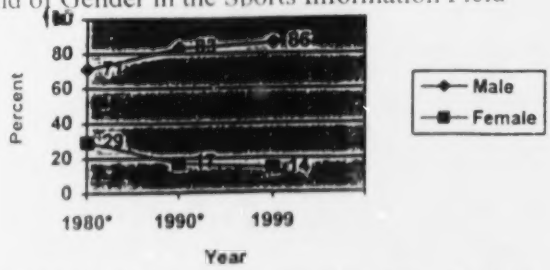
Figure 4. Trend of Gender in the Sports Information Field



*Note. The 1980 and 1990 numbers are taken from Creedon, et. Al. (1994).

Figure 5 Outward Influence of Society on Images of Women

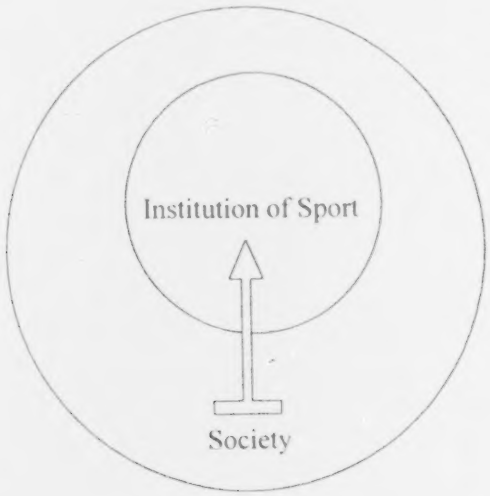


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Figure 6. Inward Influence of the Institution of Sport on Images of Women